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the says Sam Johnson reader have a care
D lightly or you'll wake a sleeping bear
D he was hunted in dispute
olar & a Christian yet a brute

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D you know all his wisdom & his folly
sayings writings with & with
well & I hate retailers of his work
tell you how he wrote & walked &
D & talk'd & shit.

THE
L I V E S
OF THE MOST EMINENT
ENGLISH POETS;
WITH
CRITICAL OBSERVATIONS
ON THEIR
W O R K S.

By SAMUEL JOHNSON.



VOLUME II.

L O N D O N :

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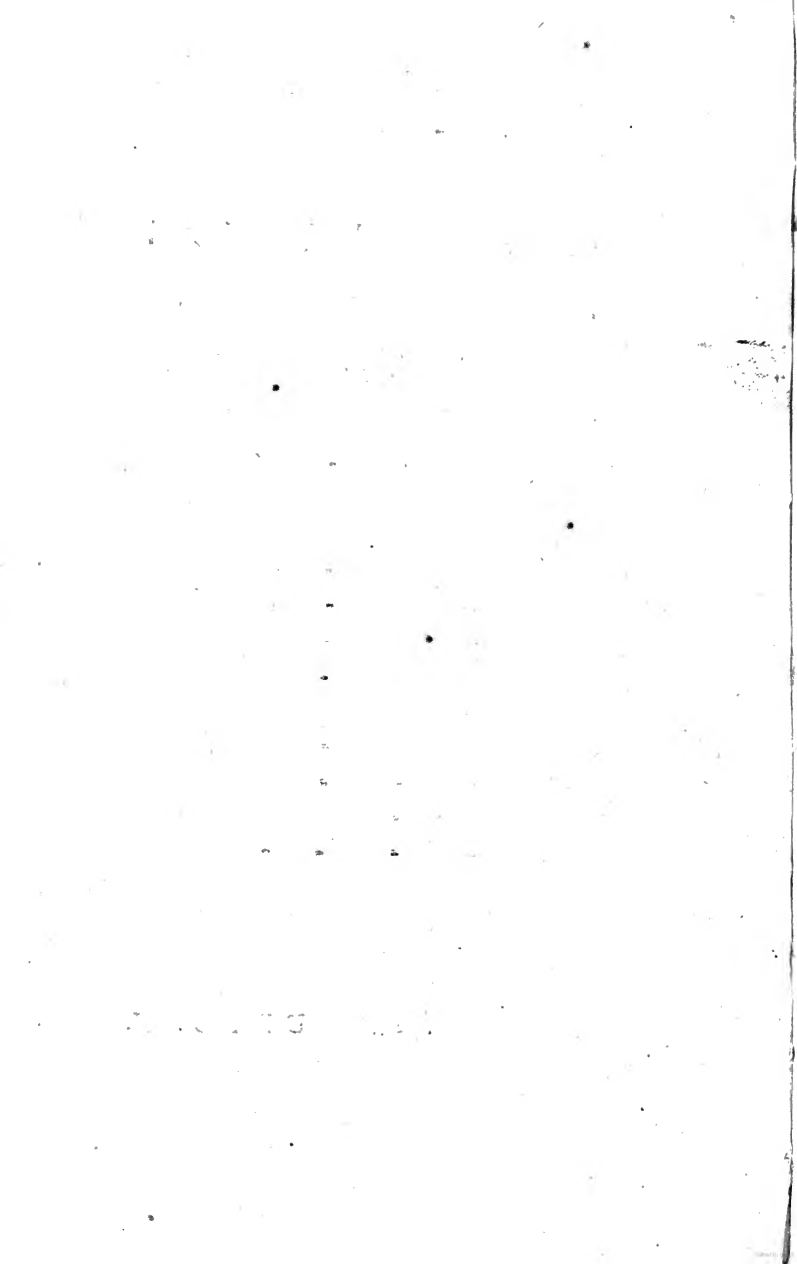
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C O N T E N T S

OF THE

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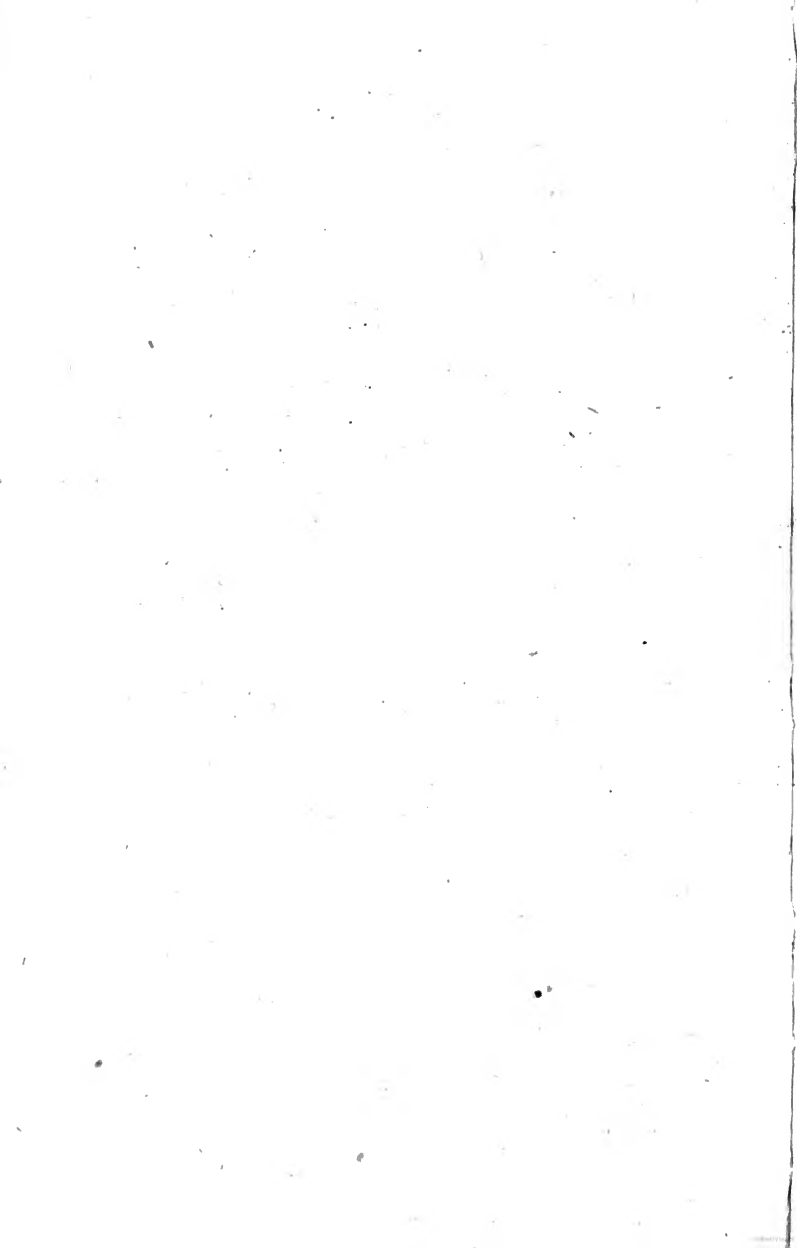
DRYDEN,	-	-	-	-	p. 1
SMITH,	-	-	-	-	219
DUKE,	-	-	-	-	263
KING,	-	-	-	-	269
SPRAT,	-	-	-	-	279
HALIFAX,	-	-	-	-	291
PARNELL,	-	-	-	-	301
GARTH,	-	-	-	-	311
ROWE,	-	-	-	-	321
ADDISON,	-	-	-	-	343
HUCHES,	-	-	-	-	445
SHEFFIELD,	-	-	-	-	457



D R Y D E N.

VOL. II.

B



D R Y D E N.

OF the great poet whose life I am about to delineate, the curiosity which his reputation must excite, will require a display more ample than can now be given. His contemporaries, however they revered his genius, left his life unwritten; and nothing therefore can be known beyond what casual mention and uncertain tradition have supplied.

JOHN DRYDEN was born August 9, 1631, at Aldwinckle near Oundle, the son of Erasmus Dryden of Tichmarsh; who was the third son of Sir Erasmus Dryden, Baronet, of Canons Ashby. All these places are in Northamptonshire; but the original

stock of the family was in the county of Huntingdon.

He is reported by his last biographer, Derrick, to have inherited from his father an estate of two hundred a year, and to have been bred, as was said, an Anabaptist. For either of these particulars no authority is given. Such a fortune ought to have secured him from that poverty which seems always to have oppressed him ; or if he had wasted it, to have made him ashamed of publishing his necessities. But though he had many enemies, who undoubtedly examined his life with a scrutiny sufficiently malicious, I do not remember that he is ever charged with waste of his patrimony, or considered as a deserter from another religion. I am therefore inclined to believe that Derrick was misinformed.

From Westminster School, where he was instructed as one of the king's scholars by Dr. Busby, whom he long after continued to reverence, he was in 1650 elected to one of the Westminster scholarships at Cambridge.

Of

Of his school performances has appeared only a poem on the death of Lord Hastings, composed with great ambition of such conceits as, notwithstanding the reformation begun by Waller and Denham, the example of Cowley still kept in reputation. Lord Hastings died of the small-pox, and his poet has made of the pustules first rosebuds, and then gems; at last exalts them into stars; and says,

No comet need foretell his change drew on,
Whose corps might seem a constellation.

At the university he does not appear to have been eager of poetical distinction, or to have lavished his early wit either on fictitious subjects or publick occasions. He probably considered that he who purposed to be an author, ought first to be a student. He obtained, whatever was the reason, no fellowship in the College. Why he was excluded cannot now be known, and it is vain to guess: had he thought himself injured, he knew how to complain. In the Life of Plutarch he mentions his education in the College with gratitude; but in a prologue at Oxford, he has these lines:

Oxford to him a dearer name shall be
 Than his own mother-university ;
 Thebes did his rude unknowing youth engage ;
 He chooses Athens in his riper age.

It was not till the death of Cromwell, in 1658, that he became a publick candidate for fame, by publishing *Heroick Stanzas on the late Lord Protector* ; which, compared with the verses of Sprat and Waller on the same occasion, were sufficient to raise great expectations of the rising poet.

When the king was restored, Dryden, like the other panegyrists of usurpation, changed his opinion, or his profession, and published *ASTREA REDUX, a poem on the happy restoration and return of his most sacred Majesty King Charles the Second.*

The reproach of inconstancy was, on this occasion, shared with such numbers, that it produced neither hatred nor disgrace ; if he changed, he changed with the nation. It was, however, not totally forgotten when his reputation raised him enemies.

The same year he praised the new king in a second poem on his restoration. In the *ASTRÆA* was the line,

An

An horrid *stillness* first *invades* the ear,
And in that silence we a tempest fear.

for which he was persecuted with perpetual ridicule, perhaps with more than was deserved. *Silence* is indeed mere privation; and, so considered, cannot *invade*; but privation likewise certainly is *darkness*, and probably *cold*; yet poetry has never been refused the right of ascribing effects or agency to them as to positive powers. No man scruples to say that *darkness* hinders him from his work; or that *cold* has killed the plants. Death is also privation, yet who has made any difficulty of assigning to Death a dart and the power of striking?

In settling the order of his works, there is some difficulty; for, even when they are important enough to be formally offered to a patron, he does not commonly date his dedication; the time of writing and publishing is not always the same; nor can the first editions be easily found, if even from them could be obtained the necessary information.

The time at which his first play was exhibited is not certainly known, because it was not

printed till it was some years afterwards altered and revived; but if the plays are printed in the order in which they were written, from the dates of some, those of others may be inferred; and thus it may be collected that in 1663, in the thirty-second year of his life, he commenced a writer for the stage; compelled undoubtedly by necessity, for he appears never to have loved that exercise of his genius, or to have much pleased himself with his own dramas.

Of the stage, when he had once invaded it, he kept possession for many years; not indeed without the competition of rivals who sometimes prevailed, or the censure of critics, which was often poignant and often just; but with such a degree of reputation as made him at least secure of being heard, whatever might be the final determination of the publick.

His first piece was a comedy called the *Wild Gallant*. He began with no happy auguries; for his performance was so much disapproved, that he was compelled to recall it, and change it from its imperfect state to the form in which it now appears, and which
is

is yet sufficiently defective to vindicate the criticks.

I wish that there were no necessity of following the progress of his theatrical fame, or tracing the meanders of his mind through the whole series of his dramatick performances; and indeed there is the less, as they do not appear in the collection to which this narration is annexed. It will be fit however to enumerate them, and to take especial notice of those that are distinguished by any peculiarity intrinsic or concomitant; for the composition and fate of eight and twenty dramas include too much of a poetical life to be omitted.

In 1664 he published the *Rival Ladies*, which he dedicated to the Earl of Orrery, a man of high reputation both as a writer and a statesman. In this play he made his essay of dramatick rhyme, which he defends in his dedication, with sufficient certainty of a favourable hearing; for Orrery was himself a writer of rhyming tragedies.

He then joined with Sir Robert Howard in the *Indian Queen*, a tragedy in rhyme.
The

The parts which either of them wrote are not distinguished.

The *Indian Emperor* was published in 1667. It is a tragedy in rhyme, intended for a sequel to *Howard's Indian Queen*. Of this connection notice was given to the audience by printed bills, distributed at the door; an expedient supposed to be ridiculed in the *Rehearsal*, when Bayes tells how many reams he has printed, to instill into the audience some conception of his plot.

In this play is the description of Night, which *Rymer* has made famous by preferring it to those of all other poets.

The practice of making tragedies in rhyme was introduced soon after the Restoration, as it seems, by the earl of Orrery, in compliance with the opinion of Charles the Second, who had formed his taste by the French theatre; and Dryden, who wrote, and made no difficulty of declaring that he wrote, only to please, and who perhaps knew that by his dexterity of versification he was more likely to excel others in rhyme than without it, very readily adopted his master's preference,

ence: He therefore made rhyming tragedies, till, by the prevalence of manifest propriety, he seems to have grown ashamed of making them any longer.

To this play is prefixed a very vehement defence of dramattick rhyme, in confutation of the preface to the *Duke of Lerma*, in which Sir Robert Howard had censured it.

In 1667, he published *Annus Mirabilis*, the *Year of Wonders*, which seems to be one of his most elaborate works.

It is addressed to Sir Robert Howard by a letter, which is not properly a dedication; and, writing to a poet, he has interspersed many critical observations, of which some are common, and some perhaps ventured without much consideration. He began, even now, to exercise the domination of conscious genius, by recommending his own performance: "I am satisfied that as the
" Prince and General [Rupert and Monk]
" are incomparably the best subjects I ever
" had, so what I have written on them is
" much better than what I have performed
" on

“ on any other. As I have endeavoured to
“ adorn my poem with noble thoughts, so
“ much more to express those thoughts with
“ elocution.”

It is written in quatrains, or heroick stanzas of four lines; a measure which he had learned from the *Gondibert* of Davenant, and which he then thought the most majestic that the English language affords. Of this stanza he mentions the encumbrances, encreased as they were by the exactness which the age required. It was, throughout his life, very much his custom to recommend his works, by representation of the difficulties that he had encountered, without appearing to have sufficiently considered, that where there is no difficulty there is no praise.

There seems to be in the conduct of Sir Robert Howard and Dryden towards each other, something that is not now easily to be explained. Dryden, in his dedication to the earl of Orrery, had defended dramattick rhyme; and Howard, in the preface to a collection of plays, had censured his opinion.

nion. Dryden vindicated himself in his *Dialogue on Dramatick Poetry*; Howard, in his Preface to the *Duke of Lerma*, animadverted on the Vindication; and Dryden, in a Preface to the *Indian Emperor*, replied to the Animadversions with great asperity, and almost with contumely. The dedication to this play is dated the year in which the *Annus Mirabilis* was published. Here appears a strange inconsistency; but Langbaine affords some help, by relating that the answer to Howard was not published in the first edition of the play, but was added when it was afterwards reprinted; and as the *Duke of Lerma* did not appear till 1668, the same year in which the Dialogue was published, there was time enough for enmity to grow up between authors, who, writing both for the theatre, were naturally rivals.

He was now so much distinguished, that in 1668 he succeeded Sir William Davenant as poet-laureat. The salary of the laureat had been raised in favour of Jonson, by Charles the First, from an hundred marks to one hundred pounds a year, and a tierce

of wine ; a revenue in those days not inadequate to the conveniencies of life.

The same year he published his *Essay on Dramatick Poetry*, an elegant and instructive dialogue ; in which we are told by Prior, that the principal character is meant to represent the duke of Dorset. This work seems to have given Addison a model for his *Dialogues upon Medals*.

Secret Love, or the Maiden Queen, is a tragi-comedy. In the preface he discusses a curious question, whether a poet can judge well of his own productions : and determines very justly, that, of the plan and disposition, and all that can be reduced to principles of science, the author may depend upon his own opinion ; but that, in those parts where fancy predominates, self-love may easily deceive. He might have observed, that what is good only because it pleases, cannot be pronounced good till it has been found to please.

Sir Martin Marall is a comedy, published without preface or dedication, and at first
without

without the name of the author. Lambaine charges it, like most of the rest, with plagiarism; and observes that the song is translated from Voiture, allowing however that both the sense and measure are exactly observed.

The Tempest is an alteration of Shakspeare's play, made by Dryden in conjunction with Davenant, "whom," says he, "I found of
"so quick a fancy, that nothing was proposed to him in which he could not
"suddenly produce a thought extremely
"pleasant and surprising; and those first
"thoughts of his, contrary to the Latin
"proverb, were not always the least happy;
"and as his fancy was quick, so likewise
"were the products of it remote and new.
"He borrowed not of any other, and his
"imaginations were such as could not easily
"enter into any other man."

The effect produced by the conjunction of these two powerful minds was, that to Shakspeare's monster Caliban is added a sister-monster Sicorax; and a woman, who, in the original play, had never seen a man,

is in this brought acquainted with a man that had never seen a woman.

About this time, in 1673, Dryden seems to have had his quiet much disturbed by the success of the *Empress of Morocco*, a tragedy written in rhyme by *Elkanah Settle*; which was so much applauded, as to make him think his supremacy of reputation in some danger. Settle had not only been prosperous on the stage, but, in the confidence of success, had published his play, with sculptures and a preface of defiance. Here was one offence added to another; and, for the last blast of inflammation, it was acted at Whitehall by the court-ladies.

Dryden could not now repress these emotions, which he called indignation, and others jealousy; but wrote upon the play and the dedication such criticism as malignant impatience could pour out in haste.

Of Settle he gives this character. "He's
 "an animal of a most deplored understand-
 "ing, without conversation. His being is
 "in a twilight of sense, and some glimmer-
 "ing

“ing of thought, which he can never fashion
 “into wit or English. His style is boister-
 “ous and rough-hewn, his rhyme incor-
 “rigibly lewd, and his numbers perpetually
 “harsh and ill-sounding. The little talent
 “which he has, is fancy. He sometimes
 “labours with a thought; but, with the
 “pudder he makes to bring it into the
 “world, ’tis commonly still-born; so that,
 “for want of learning and elocution, he will
 “never be able to express any thing either
 “naturally or justly!”

This is not very decent; yet this is one
 of the pages, in which criticism prevails
 most over brutal fury. He proceeds: “He
 “has a heavy hand at fools, and a great
 “felicity in writing nonsense for them.
 “Fools they will be in spite of him. His
 “King, his two Empresses, his villain, and
 “his sub-villain, nay his hero, have all a
 “certain natural cast of the father—their fol-
 “ly was born and bred in them, and some-
 “thing of the Elkanah will be visible.”

This is Dryden’s general declamation; I
 will not withhold from the reader a parti-
 cular remark. Having gone through the

first act, he says, " To conclude this act with
 " the most rumbling piece of nonsense
 " spoken yet,

" To flattering lightning our feign'd smiles
 " conform,

" Which back'd with thunder do but gild a
 " storm.

" *Conform a smile to lightning, make a smile*
 " *imitate lightning, and flattering lightning:*
 " lightning sure is a threatening thing.
 " And this lightning must *gild a storm*. Now
 " if I must conform my smiles to lightning,
 " then my smiles must gild a storm too:
 " to *gild* with *smiles* is a new invention of
 " *gilding*. And gild a storm by being
 " *backed with thunder*. Thunder is part of
 " the storm; so one part of the storm must
 " help to *gild* another part, and help by
 " *backing*; as if a man would gild a thing
 " the better for being backed, or having a
 " load upon his back. So that here is
 " *gilding* by *conforming, smiling, lightning,*
 " *backing, and thundering*. The whole is as
 " if I should say thus, I will make my
 " counterfeit smiles look like a flattering
 " stone-horse, which, being backed with a
 " trooper, does but gild the battle. I am
 " mistaken if nonsense is not here pretty
 " thick

“ thick fown. Sure the poet writ these two
 “ lines aboard some smack in a storm, and,
 “ being sea-sick, spewed up a good lump
 “ of clotted nonsense at once.”

Here is perhaps a sufficient specimen ;
 but as the pamphlet, though Dryden's, has
 never been thought worthy of republica-
 tion, and is not easily to be found, it may
 gratify curiosity to quote it more largely.

Whene'er she bleeds,
 He no severer a damnation needs,
 That dares pronounce the sentence of her death,
 Than the infection that attends that breath.

“ *That attends that breath.*—The poet is at
 “ *breath* again ; *breath* can never 'scape him ;
 “ and here he brings in a *breath* that must
 “ be *infectious* with *pronouncing* a sentence ;
 “ and this sentence is not to be pronounced
 “ till the condemned party *bleeds* ; that is,
 “ she must be executed first, and sentenced
 “ after ; and the *pronouncing* of this *sentence*
 “ will be infectious ; that is, others will
 “ catch the disease of that sentence, and
 “ this infecting of others will torment a
 “ man's self. The whole is thus ; *when*
 “ *she bleeds, thou needest no greater hell or*

" *torment to thyself, than infecting of others*
 " *by pronouncing a sentence upon her.* What
 " hodge-podge does he make here! Never
 " was Dutch grout such clogging, thick,
 " indigestible stuff. But this is but a taste
 " to stay the stomach; we shall have a more
 " plentiful mess presently.

" Now to dish up the poet's broth, that
 " I promised:

For when we're dead, and our freed souls enlarg'd,

Of nature's grosser burden we're discharg'd,

Then gently, as a happy lover's sigh,

Like wandering meteors through the air we'll fly,

And in our airy walk, as subtle guests,

We'll steal into our cruel fathers breasts,

There read their souls, and track each passion's
sphere:

See how Revenge moves there, Ambition here.

And in their orbs view the dark characters

Of sieges, ruins, murders, blood and wars.

We'll blot out all those hideous draughts, and
write

Pure and white forms; then with a radiant
light

Their breasts encircle, till their passions be

Gentle as nature in its infancy:

Till

Till soften'd by our charms their furies cease,
 And their revenge resolves into a peace.
 Thus by our death their quarrel ends,
 Whom living we made foes, dead we'll make
 friends.

“ If this be not a very liberal mess, I will
 “ refer myself to the stomach of any mo-
 “ derate guest. And a rare mess it is, far
 “ excelling any Westminster white-broth.
 “ It is a kind of gibblet porridge, made
 “ of the gibblets of a couple of young geese,
 “ stodged full of *meteors, orbs, spheres, track,*
 “ *hideous draughts, dark characters, white*
 “ *forms,* and *radiant lights*, designed not only
 “ to please appetite, and indulge luxury;
 “ but it is also physical, being an approved
 “ medicine to purge choler: for it is pro-
 “ pounded by Morena, as a receipt to cure
 “ their fathers of their cholerick humours:
 “ and were it written in characters as bar-
 “ barous as the words, might very well pass
 “ for a doctor's bill. To conclude, it is
 “ porridge, 'tis a receipt, 'tis a pig with a
 “ pudding in the belly, 'tis I know not
 “ what: for, certainly, never any one that
 “ pretended to write sense, had the impu-
 “ dence before to put such stuff as this,
 C 3 “ into

“ into the mouths of those that were to
 “ speak it before an audience, whom he did
 “ not take to be all fools ; and after that
 “ to print it too, and expose it to the ex-
 “ mination of the world. But let us see,
 “ what we can make of this stuff :

For when we're dead, and our freed souls en-
 larg'd—

“ Here he tells us what it is to be *dead* ; it
 “ is to have *our freed souls set free*. Now if
 “ to have a soul set free is to be dead, then
 “ to have a *freed soul* set free, is to have a
 “ dead man die.

Then gentle, as a happy lover's sigh—

“ They two like one *sigh*, and that one *sigh*
 “ like two wandering meteors,

—shall flie through the air—

“ That is, they shall mount above like fall-
 “ ing stars, or else they shall skip like two
 “ Jacks with lanthorns, or Will with a
 “ wisp, and Madge with a candle.”

*And in their airy walk steal into their cruel
 fathers breasts, like subtle guests. So “ that
 “ their fathers breasts must be in an airy
 “ walk,*

“ *walk, an airy walk of a flier. And there*
 “ *they will read their souls, and track the*
 “ *spheres of their passions. That is, these*
 “ *walking fliers, Jack with a lanthorn, &c.*
 “ *will put on his spectacles, and fall a reading*
 “ *souls, and put on his pumps and fall a*
 “ *tracking of spheres; so that he will read*
 “ *and run, walk and fly at the same time!*
 “ *Oh! Nimble Jack. Then he will see, how*
 “ *revenge here, how ambition there—The*
 “ *birds will hop about. And then view the*
 “ *dark characters of sieges, ruins, murders,*
 “ *blood, and wars, in their orbs: “ Track the*
 “ *characters to their forms! Oh! rare sport*
 “ *for Jack. Never was place so full of*
 “ *game as these breasts! You cannot stir but*
 “ *flush a sphere, start a character, or un-*
 “ *kennel an orb!*”

Settle's is said to have been the first play
 embellished with sculptures; those ornaments
 seem to have given poor Dryden great dis-
 turbance. He tries however to ease his pain,
 by venting his malice in a parody.

“ The poet has not only been so impudent
 “ to expose all this stuff, but so arrogant to

" defend it with an epistle; like a faucy
 " booth-keeper, that, when he had put a
 " cheat upon the people, would wrangle and
 " fight with any that would not like it, or
 " would offer to discover it; for which ar-
 " rogance our poet receives this correction;
 " and to jerk him a little the sharper, I will
 " not transpose his verse, but by the help
 " of his own words trans-non-sense sense,
 " that, by my stuff, people may judge the
 " better what his is:

" Great Boy, thy tragedy and sculptures done
 " From prefs, and plates in fleets do homeward

" come:

" And in ridiculous and humble pride,
 " Their course in ballad-fingers baskets guide,
 " Whose greasy twigs do all new beauties take,
 " From the gay shews thy dainty sculptures
 " make.

" Thy lines a mess of rhiming nonsense yield,
 " A senseless tale, with flattering fustian fill'd.
 " No grain of sense does in one line appear,
 " Thy words big bulks of boisterous bombast
 " bear.

" With noise they move, and from players
 " mouths rebound,

" When their tongues dance to thy words emp-
 " ty sound,

" By

“ By thee inspir’d the rumbling verses roll,
“ As if that rhyme and bombast lent a soul :
“ And with that soul they seem taught duty too,
“ To huffing words does humble nonsense bow,
“ As if it would thy worthless worth enhance,
“ To th’ lowest rank of fops thy praise advance;
“ To whom, by instinct, all thy stuff is dear ;
“ Their loud claps echo to the theatre.
“ From breaths of fools thy commendation
“ spreads,
“ Fame sings thy praise with mouths of logger-
“ heads.
“ With noise and laughing each thy fustian
“ greets,
“ ’Tis clapt by quires of empty-headed cits,
“ Who have their tribute sent, and homage
“ given,
“ As men in whispers send loud noise to heaven,
“ Thus I have daubed him with his own
“ puddle : and now we are come from a-
“ board his dancing, masking, rebounding,
“ breathing fleet ; and as if we had land-
“ ed at Gotham, we meet nothing but
“ fools and nonsense.”

Such was the criticism to which the genius
of Dryden could be reduced, between rage
and terrour ; rage with little provocation,
and

and terrour with little danger. To see the highest minds thus levelled with the meanest, may produce some solace to the consciousness of weakness, and some mortification to the pride of wisdom. But let it be remembered, that minds are not levelled in their powers but when they are first levelled in their desires. Dryden and Settle had both placed their happiness in the claps of multitudes.

The *Mock Astrologer*, a comedy, is dedicated to the illustrious duke of Newcastle, whom he courts by adding to his praises those of his lady, not only as a lover but a partner of his studies. It is displeasing to think how many names, once celebrated, are since forgotten. Of Newcastle's works nothing is now known but his treatise on horsemanship.

The Preface seems very elaborately written, and contains many just remarks on the Fathers of the English drama. Shakspeare's plots, he says, are in the hundred novels of *100 Novels of Cinthio's Cinthio*; those of Beaumont and Fletcher in Spanish Stories; Jonson only made them for himself. His criticisms upon tragedy, comedy, *Shakspeare's comedies & plays*

comedy, and farce, are judicious and profound. He endeavours to defend the immorality of some of his comedies by the example of former writers; which is only to say, that he was not the first nor perhaps the greatest offender. Against those that accused him of plagiarism, he alleges a favourable expression of the king: "He only desired
" that they, who accuse me of thefts, would
" steal him plays like mine;" and then relates how much labour he spends in fitting for the English stage what he borrows from others.

Tyrannick Love, or the Virgin Martyr, was another tragedy in rhyme, conspicuous for many passages of strength and elegance, and many of empty noise and ridiculous turbulence. The rants of Maximin have been always the sport of criticism; and were at length, if his own confession may be trusted, the shame of the writer.

Of this play he takes care to let the reader know, that it was contrived and written in seven weeks. Want of time was often
his

his excuse, or perhaps shortness of time was his private boast in the form of an apology.

It was written before the *Conquest of Granada*, but published after it. The design is to recommend piety. “ I considered that
“ pleasure was not the only end of poesy,
“ and that even the instructions of morality
“ were not so wholly the business of a poet,
“ as that precepts and examples of piety
“ were to be omitted; for to leave that employment altogether to the clergy, were to
“ forget that religion was first taught in
“ verse, which the laziness or dulness of succeeding priesthood turned afterwards into
“ prose.” Thus foolishly could Dryden write, rather than not shew his malice to the parsons.

The two parts of the *Conquest of Granada* are written with a seeming determination to glut the publick with dramatick wonders; to exhibit in its highest elevation a theatrical meteor of incredible love and impossible valour, and to leave no room for a wilder flight to the extravagance of posterity. All the
rays

rays of romantick heat, whether amorous or warlike, glow in Almanzor by a kind of concentration. He is above all laws; he is exempt from all restraints; he ranges the world at will, and governs wherever he appears. x He fights without enquiring the cause, and loves in spite of the obligations of justice, of rejection by his mistress, and of prohibition from the dead. Yet the scenes are, for the most part, delightful; they exhibit a kind of illustrious depravity, and majestic madness: such as, if it is sometimes despised, is often revered, and in which the ridiculous is mingled with the astonishing.

In the Epilogue to the second part of the *Conquest of Granada*, Dryden indulges his favourite pleasure of discrediting his predecessors; and this Epilogue he has defended by a long postscript. He had promised a second dialogue, in which he should more fully treat of the virtues and faults of the English poets, who have written in the dramattick, epick, or lyrick way. This promise was never formally performed; but, with respect to the dramattick writers, he

has given us in his prefaces, and in this postscript, something equivalent; but his purpose being to exalt himself by the comparison, he shews faults distinctly, and only praises excellence in general terms.

A play thus written, in professed defiance of probability, naturally drew down upon itself the vultures of the theatre. One of the criticks that attacked it was *Martin Clifford*, to whom *Sprat* addressed the *Life of Cowley*, with such veneration of his critical powers as might naturally excite great expectations of instruction from his remarks. But let honest credulity beware of receiving characters from contemporary writers. Clifford's remarks, by the favour of Dr. *Percy*, were at last obtained; and, that no man may ever want them more, I will extract enough to satisfy all reasonable desire.

In the first Letter his observation is only general: "You do live," says he, "in as much ignorance and darkness as you did in the womb: your writings are like a Jack-of-all-trades shop; they have a variety, but nothing of value; and if thou
" art

“ art not the dullest plant-animal that ever
“ the earth produced, all that I have
“ conversed with are strangely mistaken in
“ thee.”

In the second, he tells him that Almanzor is not more copied from Achilles than from Ancient Pistol. “ But I am,” says he, “ strangely mistaken if I have not
“ seen this very *Almanzor* of yours in some
“ disguise about this town, and passing under another name. Pr’ythee tell me true,
“ was not this Huffcap once the *Indian*
“ *Emperor*, and at another time did he not
“ call himself *Maximin*? Was not *Lyndaraxa* once called *Almeira*? I mean under
“ *Montezuma* the Indian Emperor. I protest and vow they are either the same, or
“ so alike that I cannot, for my heart, distinguish one from the other. You are
“ therefore a strange unconscionable thief;
“ thou art not content to steal from others,
“ but dost rob thy poor wretched self too.”

Now was *Settle's* time to take his revenge. He wrote a vindication of his own lines; and, if he is forced to yield any thing, makes
reprisals

reprisals upon his enemy. To say that his answer is equal to the censure, is no high commendation. To expose Dryden's method of analysing his expressions, he tries the same experiment upon the description of the ships in the *Indian Emperor*, of which however he does not deny the excellence; but intends to shew, that by studied misconstruction every thing may be equally represented as ridiculous. After so much of Dryden's elegant animadversions, justice requires that something of Settle's should be exhibited. The following observations are therefore extracted from a quarto pamphlet of ninety-five pages :

“ Fate after him below with pain did move,

“ And victory could scarce keep pace above.

“ These two lines, if he can shew me any

“ sense or thought in, or any thing but

“ bombast and noise, he shall make me be-

“ lieve every word in his observations on

“ *Morocco* sense.

“ In the *Empress of Morocco* were these
“ lines :

“ I'll

" I'll travel then to some remoter sphere,
 " Till I find out new worlds, and crown you
 " there.

" On which Dryden made this remark :

" *I believe our learned author takes a sphere*
 " *for a country: the sphere of Morocco, as if*
 " *Morocco were the globe of earth and water ;*
 " *but a globe is no sphere neither, by his leave,"*
 " &c. So *sphere* must not be sense, unless
 " it relate to a circular motion about a globe,
 " in which sense the astronomers use it. I
 " would desire him to expound those lines
 " in *Granada* :

" I'll to the turrets of the palace go,
 " And add new fire to those that fight below.
 " Thence, hero-like, with torches by my side,
 " (Far be the omen tho') my Love I'll guide.
 " No, like his better fortune I'll appear,
 " With open arms, loose vail and flowing hair,
 " Just flying forward from my rowling sphere. }

" I wonder, if he be so strict, how he dares
 " make so bold with *sphere* himself, and be
 " so critical in other men's writings. For-
 " tune is fancied standing on a globe, not on
 " a *sphere*, as he told us; in the first Act.

“ Because *Elkanah's Similies* are the most
“ unlike things to what they are compared in
“ the world, I'll venture to start a simile in
“ his *Annus Mirabilis*: he gives this poeti-
“ cal description of the ship called the
“ *London*:

" The goodly London in her gallant trim,
 " The Phenix-daughter of the vanquisht old,
 " Like a rich bride does to the ocean swim,
 " And on her shadow rides in floating gold.
 " Her flag aloft spread ruffling in the wind,
 " And sanguine streamers seem'd the flood to
 " fire :

“ The weaver, charm’d with what his loom de-
“ sign’d,

" Goes on to sea, and knows not to retire.

“ With roomy decks, her guns of mighty
“ strength,

“ Whose low-laid mouths each mounting bil-
 “ low laves,

“ Deep in her draught, and warlike in her
“ length,

"She seems a sea-wasp flying on the waves.

“ What a wonderful pother is here, to make
 “ all these poetical beautifications of a ship!
 “ that is, a *phenix* in the first stanza, and but
 “ a *wasp* in the last : nay, to make his hum-
 “ ble comparison of a *wasp* more ridiculous,
 “ he

" he does not say it flies upon the waves as
 " nimbly as a wasp, or the like, but it seem-
 " ed a *wasp*. But our author at the writing
 " of this was not in his altitudes, to compare
 " ships to floating palaces; a comparison to
 " the purpose, was a perfection he did not
 " arrive to, till his *Indian Emperor's* days.
 " But perhaps his similitude has more in it
 " than we imagine; this ship had a great
 " many guns in her, and they, put all to-
 " gether, made the sting in the wasp's tail:
 " for this is all the reason I can guess, why
 " it seem'd a *wasp*. But, because we will
 " allow him all we can to help out, let it
 " be a *phenix sea-wasp*, and the rarity of such
 " an animal may do much towards the heigh-
 " tening the fancy.

" It had been much more to his pur-
 " pose, if he had designed to render the
 " senseless play little, to have searched for
 " some such pedantry as this:

" Two ifs scarce make one possibility.
 " If justice will take all and nothing give,
 " Justice, methinks, is not distributive.
 " To die or kill you, is the alternative,
 " Rather than take your life, I will not live.

“ Observe, how prettily our author chops
 “ logick in heroick verse. Three such fustian
 “ canting words as *distributive, alternative,*
 “ and *two ifs*, no man but himself would
 “ have come within the noise of. But he’s
 “ a man of general learning, and all comes
 “ into his play.

“ ’Twould have done well too, if he
 “ could have met with a rant or two, worth
 “ the observation: such as,

“ Move swiftly, Sun, and fly a lover’s pace,
 “ Leave months and weeks behind thee in thy
 “ race.

“ But surely the Sun, whether he flies a
 “ lover’s or not a lover’s pace, leaves weeks
 “ and months, nay years too, behind him in
 “ his race.

“ Poor Robin, or any other of the Philo-
 “ mathematicks; would have given him sa-
 “ tisfaction in the point.

“ If I could kill thee now, thy fate’s so low,
 “ That I must stoop, ere I can give the blow.
 “ But mine is fixt so far above thy crown,
 “ That all thy men,
 “ Piled on thy back, can never pull it down.

“ Now

“ Now where that is, Almanzor’s fate is
“ fixt, I cannot guess; but wherever it
“ is, I believe Almanzor, and think that all
“ Abdalla’s subjects, piled upon one another,
“ might not pull down his fate so well as
“ without piling: besides, I think Abdal-
“ lah so wise a man, that if Almanzor had
“ told him piling his men upon his back
“ might do the feat, he would scarce bear
“ such a weight, for the pleasure of the ex-
“ ploit: but it is a huff, and let Abdalla
“ do it if he dare.

“ The people like a headlong torrent go,

“ And every dam they break or overflow.

“ But, unoppos’d, they either lose their force,

“ Or wind in volumes to their former course.

“ A very pretty allusion, contrary to all sense
“ or reason. Torrents, I take it, let them
“ wind never so much, can never return to
“ their former course, unless he can sup-
“ pose that fountains can go upwards, which
“ is impossible: nay more, in the fore-
“ going page he tells us so too. A trick of
“ a very unfaithful memory,

“ But can no more than fountains upward flow.

“ Which of a *torrent*, which signifies a rapid
 “ stream, is much more impossible. Be-
 “ sides, if he goes to quibble, and say that
 “ it is possible by art water may be made
 “ return, and the same water run twice in
 “ one and the same channel : then he quite
 “ confutes what he says ; for, it is by being
 “ opposed, that it runs into its former
 “ course : for all engines that make water
 “ so return, do it by compulsion and oppo-
 “ sition. Or, if he means a headlong tor-
 “ rent for a tide, which would be ridiculous,
 “ yet they do not wind in volumes, but come
 “ fore-right back (if their upright lies straight
 “ to their former course), and that by op-
 “ position of the sea-water, that drives them
 “ back again.

“ And for fancy, when he lights of any
 “ thing like it, 'tis a wonder if it be not
 “ borrowed. As here, for example of, I find
 “ this fanciful thought in his *Ann. Mirab.*

“ Old father Thames raised up his reverend head ;
 “ But fear'd the fate of Simoeis would return ;
 “ Deep in his ooze he fought his sedge bed ;
 “ And shrunk his waters back into his urn.

“ This is stolen from Cowley's *Davideis*, p. 9 :

“ Swift

" Swift Jordan started, and strait backward fled,
 " Hiding amongst thick reeds his aged head.
 " And when the Spaniards their assault begin,
 " At once beat those without and those within.

" This Almanzor speaks of himself; and sure
 " for one man to conquer an army within the
 " city, and another without the city, at once,
 " is something difficult; but this flight is
 " pardonable, to some we meet with in *Gra-*
 " *nada*. Osmin, speaking of Almanzor:

" Who, like a tempest that outrides the wind,
 " Made a just battle, ere the bodies join'd.

" Pray what does this honourable person
 " mean by a *tempest that outrides the wind!*
 " A tempest that outrides itself. To suppose
 " a tempest without wind, is as bad as sup-
 " posing a man to walk without feet: for
 " if he supposes the tempest to be something
 " distinct from the wind, yet as being the ef-
 " fect of wind only, to come before the cause
 " is a little preposterous: so that, if he takes
 " it one way, or if he takes it the other,
 " those two *ifs* will scarce make one *possibi-*
 " *lity*." Enough of Settle.

Marriage Alamode is a comedy, dedicated
 to the Earl of Rochester; whom he acknow-
 ledges not only as the defender of his poetry,

but the promoter of his fortune. Langbaine places this play in 1673. The earl of Rochester therefore was the famous Wilmot, whom yet tradition always represents as an enemy to Dryden, and who is mentioned by him with some disrespect in the preface to Juvenal.

The Affignation, or Love in a Nunnery, a comedy, was driven off the stage, *against the opinion*, as the author says, *of the best judges*. It is dedicated, in a very elegant address, to Sir Charles Sedley; in which he finds an opportunity for his usual complaint of hard treatment and unreasonable censure.

Amboyna is a tiffue of mingled dialogue in verse and prose, and was perhaps written in less time than the *Virgin Martyr*; though the author thought not fit either ostentatiously or mournfully to tell how little labour it cost him, or at how short a warning he produced it. It was a temporary performance, written in the time of the Dutch war, to inflame the nation against their enemies; to whom he hopes, as he declares in his Epilogue, to make his poetry not less destructive than that by which Tyrtæus of old animated the

the Spartans. This play was written in the second Dutch war in 1673.

Troilus and Cressida, is a play altered from Shakspeare; but so altered that even in Langbaine's opinion, *the last scene in the third act is a masterpiece*. It is introduced by a discourse on *the grounds of criticism in tragedy*; to which I suspect that Rymer's book had given occasion.

The *Spanish Fryar* is a tragi-comedy, eminent for the happy coincidence and coalition of the two plots. As it was written against the Papists, it would naturally at that time have friends and enemies; and partly by the popularity which it obtained at first, and partly by the real power both of the serious and risible part, it continued long a favourite of the publick.

It was Dryden's opinion, at least for some time, and he maintains it in the dedication of this play, that the drama required an alternation of comick and tragick scenes, and that it is necessary to mitigate by alleviations of merriment the pressure of ponderous events, and the fatigue of toilsome passions.

passions. Whoever says he cannot perform both parts, *is but half a writer for the stage.*

The *Duke of Guise*, a tragedy witten in conjunction with Lee, as *Oedipus* had been before, seems to deserve notice only for the offence which it gave to the remnant of the Covenanters, and in general to the enemies of the court, who attacked him with great violence, and were answered by him; though at last he seems to withdraw from the conflict, by transferring the greater part of the blame or merit to his partner. It happened that a contract had been made between them, by which they were to join in writing a play; and *he happened*, says Dryden, *to claim the promise just upon the finishing of a poem, when I would have been glad of a little respite.—Two thirds of it belonged to him; and to me only the first scene of the play, the whole fourth act, and the first half or somewhat more of the fifth.*

This was a play written professedly for the party of the duke of York, whose succession was then opposed. A parallel is intended between the Leaguers of France and the Covenanters of England; and this intention produced the controversy.

Albion

Albion and Albania is a musical drama or opera, written, like the *Duke of Guise*, against the Republicans. With what success it was performed, I have not found.

The State of Innocence and Fall of Man is termed by him an opera: it is rather a tragedy in heroick rhyme, but of which the personages are such as cannot decently be exhibited on the stage. Some such production was foreseen by Marvel, who writes thus to Milton:

Or if a work so infinite be spann'd,
Jealous I was least some less skilful hand,
Such as disquiet always what is well,
And by ill-imitating would excel,
Might hence presume the whole creation's day,
To change in scenes, and show it in a play.

It is another of his hasty productions; for the heat of his imagination raised it in a month.

This composition is addressed to the princess of Modena, then dutchess of York, in a strain of flattery which disgraces genius, and which it was wonderful that any man that knew the meaning of his own words, could
use

use without self-detestation. It is an attempt to mingle earth and heaven, by praising human excellence in the language of religion.

The preface contains an apology for heroick verse, and poetick licence ; by which is meant not any liberty taken in contracting or extending words, but the use of bold fictions and ambitious figures.

The reason which he gives for printing what was never acted, cannot be overpassed : “ I was induced to it in my own defence, “ many hundred copies of it being dispersed “ abroad without my knowledge or consent, “ and every one gathering new faults, it became at length a libel against me.” These copies as they gathered faults were apparently manuscript ; and he lived in an age very unlike ours, if many hundred copies of fourteen hundred lines were likely to be transcribed. An author has a right to print his own works, and needs not seek an apology in falsehood ; but he that could bear to write the dedication felt no pain in writing the preface.

Aureng Zebe is a tragedy founded on the actions of a great prince then reigning, but over nations not likely to employ their criticks upon the transactions of the English stage. If he had known and liked his own character, our trade was not in those times secure from his resentment. His country is at such a distance, that the manners might be safely falsified, and the incidents feigned; for remoteness of place is remarked by Racine, to afford the same conveniencies to a poet as length of time.

This play is written in rhyme; and has the appearance of being the most elaborate of all the dramas. The personages are imperial; but the dialogue is often domestick, and therefore susceptible of sentiments accommodated to familiar incidents. The complaint of life is celebrated, and there are many other passages that may be read with pleasure.

This play is addressed to the earl of Mulgrave, afterwards duke of Buckingham, himself, if not a poet, yet a writer of verses, and a critick. In this address Dryden gave the

the first hints of his intention to write an epick poem. He mentions his design in terms so obscure, that he seems afraid lest his plan should be purloined, as, he says, happened to him when he told it more plainly in his preface to Juvenal. "The design," says he, "you know is great, the story English, and neither too near the present times, nor too distant from them."

All for Love, or the World well lost, a tragedy founded upon the story of Antony and Cleopatra, he tells us, *is the only play which he wrote for himself*; the rest were given to the people. It is by universal consent accounted the work in which he has admitted the fewest improprieties of style or character; but it has one fault equal to many, though rather moral than critical, that by admitting the romantick omnipotence of Love, he has recommended as laudable and worthy of imitation that conduct which, through all ages, the good have censured as vitious, and the bad despised as foolish.

Of this play the prologue and the epilogue, though written upon the common
topicks

topicks of malicious and ignorant criticism, and without any particular relation to the characters or incidents of the drama, are deservedly celebrated for their elegance and spriteliness.

Limberham, or the kind Keeper, is a comedy, which, after the third night, was prohibited as too indecent for the stage. What gave offence, was in the printing, as the author says, altered or omitted. Dryden confesses that its indecency was objected to; but Langbaine, who yet seldom favours him, imputes its expulsion to resentment, because it *so much exposed the keeping part of the town*.

Oedipus is a tragedy formed by Dryden and Lee, in conjunction, from the works of Sophocles, Seneca, and Corneille. Dryden planned the scenes, and composed the first and third acts.

Don Sebastian is commonly esteemed either the first or second of his dramatick performances. It is too long to be all acted, and has many characters and many incidents;

dents ; and though it is not without fallies of frantick dignity, and more noise than meaning, yet as it makes approaches to the possibilities of real life, and has some sentiments which leave a strong impression, it continued long to attract attention. Amidst the distresses of princes, and the vicissitudes of empire, are inserted several scenes which the writer intended for comick ; but which, I suppose, that age did not much commend, and this would not endure. There are, however, passages of excellence universally acknowledged ; the dispute and the reconciliation of Dorax and Sebastian has always been admired.

This play was first acted in 1690, after Dryden had for some years discontinued dramatick poetry.

Amphitryon is a comedy derived from Plautus and Moliere. The dedication is dated Oct. 1690. This play seems to have succeeded at its first appearance ; and was, I think, long considered as a very diverting entertainment.

Cleomenes.

Cleomenes is a tragedy, only remarkable as it occasioned an incident related in the *Guardian*, and allusively mentioned by Dryden in his preface. As he came out from the representation, he was accosted thus by some airy stripling: *Had I been left alone with a young beauty, I would not have spent my time like your Spartan.* That, Sir, said Dryden, *perhaps is true; but give me leave to tell you, that you are no hero.*

King Arthur is another opera. It was the last work that Dryden performed for King Charles, who did not live to see it exhibited; and it does not seem to have been ever brought upon the stage. In the dedication to the marquis of Halifax, there is a very elegant character of Charles, and a pleasing account of his latter life.

His last drama was *Love triumphant*, a tragi-comedy. In his dedication to the earl of Salisbury he mentions *the lowness of fortune to which he has voluntarily reduced himself, and of which he has no reason to be ashamed.*

This play appeared in 1694. It is said to have been unsuccessful. The catastrophe, proceeding merely from a change of mind, is confessed by the author to be defective. Thus he began and ended his dramattick labours with ill success.

From such a number of theatrical pieces it will be supposed, by most readers, that he must have improved his fortune; at least, that such diligence with such abilities must have set penury at defiance. But in Dryden's time the drama was very far from that universal approbation which it has now obtained. The playhouse was abhorred by the Puritans, and avoided by those who desired the character of seriousness or decency. A grave lawyer would have debased his dignity, and a young trader would have impaired his credit, by appearing in those mansions of dissolute licentiousness. The profits of the theatre, when so many classes of the people were deducted from the audience, were not great; and the poet had for a long time but a single night. The first that had two nights was *Southern*, and the first

first that had three was *Rowe*. There were however, in those days, arts of improving a poet's profit, which Dryden forbore to practise; and a play therefore seldom produced him more than a hundred pounds, by the accumulated gain of the third night, the dedication, and the copy.

Almost every piece had a dedication, written with such elegance and luxuriance of praise, as neither haughtiness nor avarice could be imagined able to resist. But he seems to have made flattery too cheap. That praise is worth nothing of which the price is known.

To increase the value of his copies, he often accompanied his work with a preface of criticism; a kind of learning then almost new in the English language, and which he, who had considered with great accuracy the principles of writing, was able to distribute copiously without much labour. By these dissertations the publick judgment must have been much improved; and Swift, who conversed with Dryden, relates that he regretted the success of his own instructions, and found

his readers made suddenly too skilful to be easily satisfied.

His prologues had such reputation, that for some time a play was considered as less likely to be well received, if some of his verses did not introduce it. The price of a prologue was two guineas, till being asked to write one for Mr. Southern, he demanded three; *Not, said he, young man, out of disrespect to you, but the players have had my goods too cheap.*

Though he declares, that in his own opinion his genius was not dramatick, he had great confidence in his own fertility; for he is said to have engaged, by contract, to furnish four plays a year.

It is certain that in one year, 1678, he published *All for Love*, *Affignation*, two parts of the *Conquest of Granada*, *Sir Martin Marall*, and the *State of Innocence*, six complete plays; with a celerity of performance, which, though all Langbaine's charges of plagiarism should be allowed, shews such facility of composition, such readiness of language,

guage, and such copiousness of sentiment, as, since the time of Lopez de Vega, perhaps no other author has possessed.

He did not enjoy his reputation, however great, nor his profits, however small, without molestation. He had criticks to endure, and rivals to oppose. The two most distinguished wits of the nobility, the duke of Buckingham and earl of Rochester, declared themselves his enemies.

Buckingham characterised him in 1671, by the name of *Bayes* in the *Rebearfal*; a farce which he is said to have written with the assistance of Butler the author of *Hudibras*, Martin Clifford of the Charterhouse, and Dr. Sprat, the friend of Cowley, then his chaplain. Dryden and his friends laughed at the length of time, and the number of hands employed upon this performance; in which, though by some artifice of action it yet keeps possession of the stage, it is not possible now to find any thing that might not have been written without so long delay, or a confederacy so numerous.

To adjust the minute events of literary history, is tedious and troublesome; it requires indeed no great force of understanding, but often depends upon enquiries which there is no opportunity of making, or is to be fetched from books and pamphlets not always at hand.

The *Rebearfal* was played in 1671, and yet is represented as ridiculing passages in the *Conquest of Granada* and *Assignation*, which were not published till 1678, in *Marriage Alamode* published in 1673, and in *Tyrannick Love* of 1677. These contradictions shew how rashly satire is applied.

It is said that this farce was originally intended against Davenant, who in the first draught was characterised by the name of *Bilboa*. Davenant had been a soldier and an adventurer.

There is one passage in the *Rebearfal* still remaining, which seems to have related originally to Davenant. *Bayes* hurts his nose, and comes in with brown paper applied to the bruise; how this affected Dryden, does
not

not appear. Davenant's nose had suffered such diminution by mishaps among the women, that a patch upon that part evidently denoted him. X

It is said likewise that Sir Robert Howard was once meant. The design was probably to ridicule the reigning poet, whoever he might be.

Much of the personal satire, to which it might owe its first reception, is now lost or obscured. *Bayes* probably imitated the dress, and mimicked the manner, of Dryden; the cant words which are so often in his mouth may be supposed to have been Dryden's habitual phrases, or customary exclamations. *Bayes*, when he is to write, is blooded and purged: this, as Lamotte relates himself to have heard, was the real practice of the poet.

There were other strokes in the *Rehearsal* by which malice was gratified: the debate between Love and Honour, which keeps prince *Volscius* in a single boot, is said to have alluded to the misconduct of the duke of Ormond, who lost Dublin to the rebels while he was toying with a mistress.

The earl of Rochester, to suppress the reputation of Dryden, took Settle into his protection, and endeavoured to persuade the publick that its approbation had been to that time misplaced. Settle was a while in high reputation: his *Empress of Morocco*, having first delighted the town, was carried in triumph to Whitehall, and played by the ladies of the court. Now was the poetical meteor at the highest; the next moment began its fall. Rochester withdrew his patronage; seeming resolved, says one of his biographers, *to have a judgement contrary to that of the town*. Perhaps being unable to endure any reputation beyond a certain height, even when he had himself contributed to raise it.

Neither criticks nor rivals did Dryden much mischief, unless they gained from his own temper the power of vexing him, which his frequent bursts of resentment gave reason to suspect. He is always angry at some past, or afraid of some future censure; but he lessens the smart of his wounds by the balm of his own approbation, and endeavours to repel the shafts of criticism by opposing a shield of adamant confidence.

The

The perpetual accusation produced against him, was that of plagiarism, against which he never attempted any vigorous defence; for, though he was perhaps sometimes injuriously censured, he would by denying part of the charge have confessed the rest; and as his adversaries had the proof in their own hands, he, who knew that wit had little power against facts, wisely left in that perplexity which generality produces a question which it was his interest to suppress, and which, unless provoked by vindication, few were likely to examine.

Though the life of a writer, from about thirty-five to sixty-three, may be supposed to have been sufficiently busied by the composition of eight and twenty pieces for the stage, Dryden found room in the same space for many other undertakings.

But, how much soever he wrote, he was at least once suspected of writing more; for in 1679 a paper of verses, called *an Essay on Satire*, was shewn about in manuscript, by which the earl of Rochester, the dutchess of Portsmouth, and others, were so much provoked,

voked, that, as was supposed, for the actors were never discovered, they procured Dryden, whom they suspected as the author, to be waylaid and beaten. This incident is mentioned by the duke of Buckinghamshire, the true writer, in his *Art of Poetry*; where he says of Dryden,

Though prais'd and beaten for another's rhymes,
His own deserves as great applause sometimes.

His reputation in time was such, that his name was thought necessary to the success of every poetical or literary performance, and therefore he was engaged to contribute something, whatever it might be, to many publications. He prefixed the *Life of Polybius* to the translation of Sir Henry Sheers; and those of *Lucian* and *Plutarch* to versions of their works by different hands. Of the *English Tacitus* he translated the first book; and, if *Gordon* be credited, translated it from the French. Such a charge can hardly be mentioned without some degree of indignation; but it is not, I suppose, so much to be inferred that Dryden wanted the literature necessary to the perusal of *Tacitus*, as that, considering himself as hidden in a crowd, he had no awe of the publick; and writing
merely

merely for money, was contented to get it by the nearest way.

In 1680, the *Epistles* of Ovid being translated by the poets of the time, among which one was the work of Dryden, and another of Dryden and Lord Mulgrave, it was necessary to introduce them by a preface; and Dryden, who on such occasions was regularly summoned, prefixed a discourse upon translation, which was then struggling for the liberty that it now enjoys. Why it should find any difficulty in breaking the shackles of verbal interpretation, which must for ever debar it from elegance, it would be difficult to conjecture, were not the power of prejudice every day observed. The authority of Jonson, Sandys, and Holiday, had fixed the judgement of the nation; and it was not easily believed that a better way could be found than they had taken, though Denham, Waller, and Cowley, had tried to give examples of a different practice.

In 1681, Dryden became yet more conspicuous by uniting politicks with poetry, in the memorable satire called *Abſalom and Achitophel*, written against the faction which,

by lord Shaftesbury's incitement, set the duke of Monmouth at its head.

Of this poem, in which personal satire was applied to the support of publick principles, and in which therefore every mind was interested, the reception was eager, and the sale so large, that my father, an old book-seller, told me, he had not known it equalled but by *Sacheverell's* trial.

The reason of this general perusal Addison has attempted to derive from the delight which the mind feels in the investigation of secrets; and thinks that curiosity to decypher the names procured readers to the poem. There is no need to enquire why those verses were read, which, to all the attractions of wit, elegance, and harmony, added the co-operation of all the factious passions, and filled every mind with triumph or resentment.

It could not be supposed that all the provocation given by Dryden would be endured without resistance or reply. Both his person and his party were exposed in their turns to the shafts of satire, which, though neither so
well

well pointed nor perhaps so well aimed, undoubtedly drew blood.

One of these poems is called *Dryden's Satire on his Muse*; ascribed, though, as Pope says, falsely, to *Somers*, who was afterwards Chancellor. The poem, whose soever it was, has much virulence, and some spriteliness. The writer tells all the ill that he can collect both of Dryden and his friends.

The poem of *Absalom and Achitophel* had two answers, now both forgotten; one called *Azaria and Hushia*; the other *Absalom senior*. Of these hostile compositions, Dryden apparently imputes *Absalom senior* to *Settle*, by quoting in his verses against him the second line. *Azaria and Hushia* was, as *Wood* says, imputed to him, though it is somewhat unlikely that he should write twice on the same occasion. This is a difficulty which I cannot remove, for want of a minuter knowledge of poetical transactions.

The same year he published the *Medal*, of which the subject is a medal struck on lord Shaftesbury's escape from a prosecution, by the *ignoramus* of a grand jury of Londoners.

In

In both poems he maintains the same principles, and saw them both attacked by the same antagonist. Elkanah Settle, who had answered *Absalom*, appeared with equal courage in opposition to the *Medal*, and published an answer called *The Medal reversed*, with so much success in both encounters, that he left the palm doubtful, and divided the suffrages of the nation. Such are the revolutions of fame, or such is the prevalence of fashion, that the man whose works have not yet been thought to deserve the care of collecting them; who died forgotten in an hospital; and whose latter years were spent in contriving shows for fairs, and carrying an elegy or epithalamium, of which the beginning and end were occasionally varied, but the intermediate parts were always the same, to every house where there was a funeral or a wedding; might, with truth, have had inscribed upon his stone,

Here lies the Rival and Antagonist of Dryden.

Settle was, for this rebellion, severely chastised by Dryden under the name of *Doeg*, in the second part of *Absalom and Achitophel*, and was perhaps for his factious audacity

city made the city poet, whose annual office was to describe the glories of the Mayor's day. Of these bards he was the last, and seems not much to have deserved even this degree of regard, if it was paid to his political opinions; for he afterwards wrote a panegyrick on the virtues of judge Jefferies, and what more could have been done by the meanest zealot for prerogative?

Of translated fragments, or occasional poems, to enumerate the titles, or settle the dates would be tedious, with little use. It may be observed, that as Dryden's genius was commonly excited by some personal regard, he rarely writes upon a general topick.

Soon after the accession of king James, when the design of reconciling the nation to the church of Rome became apparent, and the religion of the court gave the only efficacious title to its favours, Dryden declared himself a convert to popery. This at any other time might have passed with little censure. Sir *Kenelm Digby* embraced popery; the two *Rainolds* reciprocally converted one another; and *Chillingworth* himself was a while so entangled in the wilds of controversy, as to re-

tire

tire for quiet to an infallible church. If men of argument and study can find such difficulties, or such motives, as may either unite them to the church of Rome, or detain them in uncertainty, there can be no wonder that a man, who perhaps never enquired why he was a protestant, should by an artful and experienced disputant be made a papist, overborn by the sudden violence of new and unexpected arguments, or deceived by a representation which shews only the doubts on one part, and only the evidence on the other.

That conversion will always be suspected that apparently concurs with interest. He that never finds his error till it hinders his progress towards wealth or honour, will not be thought to love Truth only for herself. Yet it may easily happen that information may come at a commodious time; and as truth and interest are not by any fatal necessity at variance, that one may by accident introduce the other. When opinions are struggling into popularity, the arguments by which they are opposed or defended become more known; and he that changes his profession would perhaps have changed it before,
with

with the like opportunities of instruction. This was then the state of popery ; every artifice was used to shew it in its fairest form ; and it must be owned to be a religion of external appearance sufficiently attractive.

It is natural to hope that a comprehensive is likewise an elevated soul, and that whoever is wise is also honest. I am willing to believe that Dryden, having employed his mind, active as it was, upon different studies, and filled it, capacious as it was, with other materials, came unprovided to the controversy, and wanted rather skill to discover the right than virtue to maintain it. But enquiries into the heart are not for man ; we must now leave him to his Judge.

The priests, having strengthened their cause by so powerful an adherent, were not long before they brought him into action. They engaged him to defend the controversial papers found in the strong-box of Charles the second, and, what yet was harder, to defend them against Stillingfleet.

With hopes of promoting popery, he was employed to translate Maimbourg's History

VOL. II. F of

of the League; which he published, with a large introduction. His name is likewise prefixed to the English *Life of Francis Xavier*; but I know not that he ever owned himself the translator. Perhaps the use of his name was a pious fraud, which however seems not to have had much effect; for neither of the books, I believe, was ever popular.

The version of *Xavier's Life* is commended by Brown, in a pamphlet not written to flatter; and the occasion of it is said to have been, that the Queen, when she solicited a son, made vows to him as her tutelary saint.

He was supposed to have undertaken to translate *Varillas's History of Heresies*; and when *Burnet* published *Remarks* upon it, to have written an *Answer*; upon which Burnet makes the following observation:

“ I have been informed from England,
 “ that a gentleman, who is famous both for
 “ poetry and several other things, had spent
 “ three months in translating M. Varillas's
 “ History; but that, as soon as my *Reflec-*
 “ tions appeared, he discontinued his la-
 “ bour,

“ bour, finding the credit of his author was
“ gone. Now, if he thinks it is recovered
“ by his Answer, he will perhaps go on with
“ his translation; and this may be, for aught
“ I know, as good an entertainment for
“ him as the conversation that he had set on
“ between the Hinds and Panthers, and all
“ the rest of animals, for whom M. Varil-
“ las may serve well enough as an author:
“ and this history and that poem are such
“ extraordinary things of their kind, that it
“ will be but suitable to see the author of
“ the worst poem become likewise the trans-
“ lator of the worst history that the age has
“ produced. If his grace and his wit im-
“ prove both proportionably, he will hardly
“ find that he has gained much by the change
“ he has made, from having no religion to
“ chuse one of the worst. It is true, he
“ had somewhat to sink from in matter of
“ wit; but as for his morals, it is scarce
“ possible for him to grow a worse man than
“ he was. He has lately wreaked his ma-
“ lice on me for spoiling his three months
“ labour; but in it he has done me all the
“ honour that any man can receive from him,
“ which is to be railed at by him. If I had

“ ill-nature enough to prompt me to wish a
 “ very bad wish for him, it should be, that
 “ he would go on and finish his translation.
 “ By that it will appear, whether the Eng-
 “ lish nation, which is the most competent
 “ judge in this matter, has, upon the seeing
 “ our debate, pronounced in M. Varillas’s
 “ favour, or in mine. It is true, Mr. D.
 “ will suffer a little by it; but at least it will
 “ serve to keep him in from other extrava-
 “ gancies; and if he gains little honour by
 “ this work, yet he cannot lose so much by
 “ it as he has done by his last employment.”

Having probably felt his own inferiority
 in Theological controversy, he was desirous
 of trying whether, by bringing poetry to aid
 his arguments, he might become a more
 efficacious defender of his new profession.
 To reason in verse was, indeed, one of his
 powers; but subtilty and harmony united
 are still feeble, when opposed to truth.

Actuated therefore by zeal for Rome, or
 hope of fame, he published the *Hind and
 Panther*, a poem in which the church of
 Rome, figured by the *milk-white Hind*, de-
 fends

sends her tenets against the church of England, represented by the *Panther*, a beast beautiful, but spotted.

A fable which exhibits two beasts talking Theology, appears at once full of absurdity; and it was accordingly ridiculed in the *City Mouse* and *Country Mouse*, a parody, written by Montague, afterwards earl of Halifax, and Prior, who then gave the first specimen of his abilities.

The conversion of such a man, at such a time, was not likely to pass uncensured. Three dialogues were published by the facetious *Thomas Brown*, of which the two first were called *Reasons of Mr. Bayes's changing his religion*: and the third *The Reasons of Mr. Hains the player's conversion and re-conversion*. The first was printed in 1688, the second not till 1690, the third in 1691. The clamour seems to have been long continued, and the subject to have strongly fixed the publick attention.

In the two first dialogues *Bayes* is brought into the company of *Crites* and *Eugenius*,

with whom he had formerly debated on dramatick poetry. The two talkers in the third are Mr. *Bayes* and Mr. *Hains*.

Brown was a man not deficient in literature, nor destitute of fancy; but he seems to have thought it the pinnacle of excellence to be a *merry fellow*; and therefore laid out his powers upon small jests or gross buffoonery, so that his performances have little intrinsic value, and were read only while they were recommended by the novelty of the event that occasioned them.

These dialogues are like his other works: what sense or knowledge they contain, is disgraced by the garb in which it is exhibited. One great source of pleasure is to call Dryden *little Bayes*. *Ajax*, who happens to be mentioned, is *he that wore as many cowbides upon his shield as would have furnished half the king's army with shoe-leather*.

Being asked whether he has seen the *Hind* and *Panther*, Crites answers: *Seen it! Mr. Bayes, why I can stir no where but it pursues me; it haunts me worse than a pewter-buttoned*

buttoned serjeant does a decayed cit. Sometimes I meet it in a band-box, when my laundress brings home my linen; sometimes, whether I will or no, it lights my pipe at a coffee-house; sometimes it surprises me in a trunkmaker's shop; and sometimes it refreshes my memory for me on the backside of a Chancery-lane parcel. For your comfort too, Mr. Bayes, I have not only seen it, as you may perceive, but have read it too, and can quote it as freely upon occasion as a frugal tradesman can quote that noble treatise the Worth of a Penny to his extravagant 'prentice, that revels in stewed apples, and penny custards.

The whole animation of these compositions arises from a profusion of ludicrous and affected comparisons. *To secure one's chastity, says Bayes, little more is necessary than to leave off a correspondence with the other sex, which, to a wise man, is no greater a punishment than it would be to a fanatick parson to be forbid seeing the Cheats and the Committee; or for my Lord Mayor and Aldermen to be interdicted the sight of the London Cuckold.—* This is the general strain, and therefore I shall be easily excused the labour of more transcription.

Brown does not wholly forget past transactions : *You began*, says Crites to Bayes, *with a very indifferent religion, and have not mended the matter in your last choice. It was but reason that your Muse, which appeared first in a Tyrant's quarrel, should employ her last efforts to justify the usurpations of the Hind.*

Next year the nation was summoned to celebrate the birth of the Prince. Now was the time for Dryden to rouse his imagination, and strain his voice. Happy days were at hand, and he was willing to enjoy and diffuse the anticipated blessings. He published a poem, filled with predictions of greatness and prosperity ; predictions of which it is not necessary to tell how they have been verified.

A few months passed after these joyful notes, and every blossom of popish hope was blasted for ever by the Revolution. A papist now could be no longer Laureat. The revenue, which he had enjoyed with so much pride and praise, was transferred to Shadwel, an old enemy, whom he had formerly
stigmatised

stigmatised by the name of *Og*. Dryden could not decently complain that he was deposed ~~×~~ but seemed very angry that Shadwel succeeded him, and has therefore celebrated the intruder's inauguration in a poem exquisitely satirical, called *Mac Flecko*; of which the *Dunciad*, as Pope himself declares, is an imitation, though more extended in its plan, and more diversified in its incidents.

It is related by Prior, that Lord Dorset, when, as chamberlain, he was constrained to eject Dryden from his office, gave him from his own purse an allowance equal to the salary. This is no romantick or incredible act of generosity; an hundred a year is often enough given to claims less cogent, by men less famed for liberality. Yet Dryden always represented himself as suffering under a publick infliction; and once particularly demands respect for the patience with which he endured the loss of his little fortune. His patron might, indeed, enjoin him to suppress his bounty; but if he suffered nothing, he should not have complained.

During

During the short reign of king James he had written nothing for the stage, being, in his opinion, more profitably employed in controversy and flattery. Of praise he might perhaps have been less lavish without inconvenience, for James was never said to have much regard for poetry : he was to be flattered only by adopting his religion.

Times were now changed : Dryden was no longer the court-poet, and was to look back for support to his former trade ; and having waited about two years, either considering himself as discountenanced by the publick, or perhaps expecting a second revolution, he produced *Don Sebastian*, in 1690 ; and in the next four years four dramas more.

In 1693 appeared a new version of Juvenal and Persius. Of Juvenal he translated the first, third, sixth, tenth, and sixteenth satires ; and of Persius the whole work. On this occasion he introduced his two sons to the publick, as nurselings of the Muses. The fourteenth of Juvenal was the work of John, and the seventh of Charles Dryden. He prefixed
a very

a very ample preface in the form of a dedication to lord Dorset; and there gives an account of the design which he had once formed to write an epick poem on the actions either of Arthur or the Black Prince. He considered the epick as necessarily including some kind of supernatural agency, and had imagined a new kind of contest between the guardian angels of kingdoms, of whom he conceived that each might be represented zealous for his charge, without any intended opposition to the purposes of the Supreme Being, of which all created minds must in part be ignorant.

This is the most reasonable scheme of celestial interposition that ever was formed. The surprizes and terrors of enchantments, which have succeeded to the intrigues and oppositions of pagan deities, afford very striking scenes, and open a vast extent to the imagination; but, as Boileau observes, and Boileau will be seldom found mistaken, with this incurable defect, that in a contest between heaven and hell we know at the beginning which is to prevail; for this reason we follow Rinaldo to the enchanted wood with more curiosity than terror.

In

In the scheme of Dryden there is one great difficulty, which yet he would perhaps have had address enough to surmount. In a war justice can be but on one side; and to entitle the hero to the protection of angels, he must fight in the defence of indubitable right. Yet some of the celestial beings, thus opposed to each other, must have been represented as defending guilt.

That this poem was never written, is reasonably to be lamented. It would doubtless have improved our numbers, and enlarged our language, and might perhaps have contributed by pleasing instruction to rectify our opinions, and purify our manners.

What he required as the indispensable condition of such an undertaking, a publick stipend, was not likely in those times to be obtained. Riches were not become familiar to us, and the nation had not yet learned to be liberal.

This plan he charged Blackmore with stealing; only, says he, *the guardian angels*
of

of kingdoms were machines too ponderous for him to manage.

In 1694, he began the most laborious and difficult of all his works, the translation of Virgil; from which he borrowed two months, that he might turn Fresnoy's Art of Painting into English prose. The preface, which he boasts to have written in twelve mornings, exhibits a parallel of poetry and painting, with a miscellaneous collection of critical remarks, such as cost a mind stored like his no labour to produce them.

In 1697, he published his version of the works of Virgil; and that no opportunity of profit might be lost, dedicated the Pastorals to the lord Clifford, the Georgics to the earl of Chesterfield, and the Eneid to the earl of Mulgrave. This œconomy of flattery, at once lavish and discreet, did not pass without observation.

This translation was censured by Milbourne, a clergyman, styled by Pope *the fairest of criticks*, because he exhibited his own version to be compared with that which he condemned.

His

His last work was his Fables, published in 1699, in consequence, as is supposed, of a contract now in the hands of Mr. Tonson; by which he obliged himself, in consideration of three hundred pounds, to finish for the press ten thousand verses.

In this volume is comprised the well-known ode on St. Cecilia's day, which, as appeared by a letter communicated to Dr. Birch, he spent a fortnight in composing and correcting. But what is this to the patience and diligence of Boileau, whose *Equivoque*, a poem of only three hundred forty-six lines, took from his life eleven months to write it, and three years to revise it!

Part of this book of Fables is the first Iliad in English, intended as a specimen of a version of the whole. Considering into what hands Homer was to fall, the reader cannot but rejoice that this project went no further.

The time was now at hand which was to put an end to all his schemes and labours.

On

On the first of May 1701, having been some time, as he tells us, a cripple in his limbs, he died in Gerard-street of a mortification in his leg.

There is extant a wild story relating to some vexatious events that happened at his funeral; which, at the end of Congreve's Life, by a writer of I know not what credit, are thus related, as I find the account transferred to a biographical dictionary :

“ Mr. Dryden dying on the Wednesday
“ morning, Dr. Thomas Sprat, then bishop
“ of Rochester and dean of Westminster,
“ sent the next day to the lady Elizabeth
“ Howard, Mr. Dryden's widow, that he
“ would make a present of the ground,
“ which was forty-pounds, with all the other
“ Abbey-fees. The lord Halifax likewise
“ sent to the lady Elizabeth, and Mr. Charles
“ Dryden her son, that, if they would
“ give him leave to bury Mr. Dryden, he
“ would inter him with a gentleman's pri-
“ vate funeral, and afterwards bestow five
“ hundred pounds on a monument in the
“ Abbey ; which, as they had no reason to
“ refuse,

“ refuse, they accepted. On the Saturday
“ following the company came: the corpse
“ was put into a velvet hearse, and eighteen
“ mourning coaches, filled with company,
“ attended. When they were just ready to
“ move, the lord Jeffries, son of the lord
“ chancellor Jeffries, with some of his rakish
“ companions coming by, asked whose fu-
“ neral it was: and being told Mr. Dry-
“ den’s, he said, “ What, shall Dryden, the
“ greatest honour and ornament of the nation,
“ be buried after this private manner! No,
“ gentlemen, let all that loved Mr. Dryden,
“ and honour his memory, alight and join
“ with me in gaining my lady’s consent to
“ let me have the honour of his interment,
“ which shall be after another manner than
“ this; and I will bestow a thousand pounds
“ on a monument in the Abbey for him.”
“ The gentlemen in the coaches, not know-
“ ing of the bishop of Rochester’s favour,
“ nor of the lord Halifax’s generous design
“ (they both having, out of respect to the
“ family, enjoined the lady Elizabeth and
“ her son to keep their favour concealed to
“ the world, and let it pass for their own
“ expence) readily came out of the coaches,
“ and

“ and attended lord Jefferies up to the lady’s
 “ bedside, who was then sick ; he repeated
 “ the purport of what he had before said ;
 “ but she absolutely refusing, he fell on his
 “ knees, vowing never to rise till his re-
 “ quest was granted. The rest of the com-
 “ pany by his desire kneeled also ; and the
 “ lady, being under a sudden surprize, faint-
 “ ed away, As soon as she recovered her
 “ speech, she cried, *No, no.* Enough, gen-
 “ tlemen, replied he ; my lady is very good,
 “ she says, *Go, go.* She repeated her for-
 “ mer words with all her strength, but in
 “ vain ; for her feeble voice was lost in their
 “ acclamations of joy ; and the lord Jefferies
 “ ordered the hearfemen to carry the corpse to
 “ Mr. Ruffel’s, an undertaker’s in Cheap-
 “ side, and leave it there till he should send
 “ orders for the embalment, which, he add-
 “ ed, should be after the royal manner.
 “ His directions were obeyed, the company
 “ dispersed, and lady Elizabeth and her son
 “ remained inconsolable. The next day
 “ Mr. Charles Dryden waited on the lord
 “ Halifax and the bishop, to excuse his mo-
 “ ther and himself, by relating the real truth.
 “ But neither his lordship nor the bishop
 VOL. II. G “ would

“ would admit of any plea ; especially
“ the latter, who had the Abbey lighted,
“ the ground opened, the choir attending,
“ an anthem ready set, and himself waiting
“ for some time without any corpse to bury.
“ The undertaker, after three days expect-
“ tance of orders for embalment without
“ receiving any, waited on the lord Jefferies ;
“ who pretending ignorance of the matter,
“ turned it off with an ill-natured jest, say-
“ ing, That those who observed the orders
“ of a drunken frolick deserved no better ;
“ that he remembered nothing at all of it ;
“ and that he might do what he pleased with
“ the corpse. Upon this, the undertaker
“ waited upon the lady Elizabeth and her
“ son, and threatned to bring the corpse
“ home, and set it before the door. They
“ desired a day’s respite, which was granted.
“ Mr. Charles Dryden wrote a handsome
“ letter to the lord Jefferies, who returned it
“ with this cool answer, “ That he knew
“ nothing of the matter, and would be trou-
“ bled no more about it.” He then address-
“ ed the lord Halifax and the bishop of Ro-
“ chester, who absolutely refused to do any
“ thing in it. In this distress Dr. Garth sent
“ for

“ for the corpse to the College of Physicians,
 “ and proposed a funeral by subscription,
 “ to which himself set a most noble example.
 “ At last a day, about three weeks after Mr.
 “ Dryden’s decease, was appointed for the
 “ interment: Dr. Garth pronounced a fine
 “ Latin oration, at the College, over the
 “ corpse; which was attended to the Abbey
 “ by a numerous train of coaches. When
 “ the funeral was over, Mr. Charles Dryden
 “ sent a challenge to the lord Jefferies, who
 “ refusing to answer it, he sent several others,
 “ and went often himself; but could nei-
 “ ther get a letter delivered, nor admittance
 “ to speak to him: which so incensed him,
 “ that he resolved, since his lordship refused
 “ to answer him like a gentleman, that he
 “ would watch an opportunity to meet, and
 “ fight off-hand, though with all the rules
 “ of honour; which his lordship hearing,
 “ left the town: and Mr. Charles Dryden
 “ could never have the satisfaction of meet-
 “ ing him, though he sought it till his death
 “ with the utmost application.”

This story I once intended to omit, as it appears with no great evidence; but having

been since informed that there is in the register of the College of Physicians an order relating to Dryden's funeral, I can doubt its truth no longer.

The gradual change of manners, though inperceptible in the process, appears great when different times, and those not very distant, are compared. If at this time a young drunken Lord should interrupt the pompous regularity of a magnificent funeral, what would be the event, but that he would be jostled out of the way, and compelled to be quiet? If he should thrust himself into a house, he would be sent roughly away; and what is yet more to the honour of the present time, I believe, that those who had subscribed to the funeral of a man like Dryden, would not, for such an accident, have withdrawn their contributions.

He was buried among the poets in Westminster Abbey, where, though the duke of Newcastle had, in a general dedication prefixed by Congreve to his dramattick works, accepted thanks for his intention of erecting him a monument, he lay long without distinction, till the duke of Buckinghamshire gave

gave him a tablet, inscribed only with the name of DRYDEN.

He married the lady Elizabeth Howard, daughter of the earl of Berkshire, with circumstances, according to the satire imputed to lord Somers, not very honourable to either party: by her he had three sons, Charles, John, and Henry. Charles was usher of the palace to pope Clement the XIth, and visiting England in 1704, was drowned in an attempt to swim cross the Thames at Windsor.

John was author of a comedy called *The Husband his own Cuckold*. He is said to have died at Rome. Henry entered into some religious order. It is some proof of Dryden's sincerity in his second religion, that he taught it to his sons. A man conscious of hypocritical profession in himself, is not likely to convert others; and as his sons were qualified in 1693 to appear among the translators of Juvenal, they must have been taught some religion before their father's change.

Of the person of Dryden I know not any account; of his mind, the portrait which

has been left by Congreve, who knew him with great familiarity, is such as adds our love of his manners to our admiration of his genius. "He was," we are told, "of a nature exceedingly humane and compassionate, ready to forgive injuries, and capable of a sincere reconciliation with those that had offended him. His friendship, where he professed it, went beyond his professions. He was of a very easy, of very pleasing access; but somewhat slow, and, as it were, diffident in his advances to others: he had that in his nature which abhorred intrusion into any society whatever. He was therefore less known, and consequently his character became more liable to misapprehensions and misrepresentations: he was very modest, and very easily to be discountenanced in his approaches to his equals or superiors. As his reading had been very extensive, so was he very happy in a memory tenacious of every thing that he had read. He was not more possessed of knowledge than he was communicative of it; but then his communication was by no means pedantick, or imposed upon the conversation, but

“ but just such, and went so far as, by the
“ natural turn of the conversation in which
“ he was engaged, it was necessarily pro-
“ moted or required. He was extreme
“ ready, and gentle in his correction of the
“ errors of any writer who thought fit to
“ consult him, and full as ready and patient
“ to admit of the reprehensions of others,
“ in respect of his own oversights or mis-
“ takes.”

To this account of Congreve nothing can be objected but the fondness of friendship; and to have excited that fondness in such a mind is no small degree of praise. The disposition of Dryden, however, is shewn in this character rather as it exhibited itself in cursory conversation, than as it operated on the more important parts of life. His placability and his friendship indeed were solid virtues; but courtesy and good-humour are often found with little real worth. Since Congreve, who knew him well, has told us no more, the rest must be collected as it can from other testimonies, and particularly from those notices which Dryden has very liberally given us of himself.

The modesty which made him so slow to advance, and so easy to be repulsed, was certainly no suspicion of deficient merit, or unconsciousness of his own value: he appears to have known, in its whole extent, the dignity of his character, and to have set a very high value on his own powers and performances. He probably did not offer his conversation, because he expected it to be solicited; and he retired from a cold reception, not submissive but indignant, with such reverence of his own greatness as made him unwilling to expose it to neglect or violation.

His modesty was by no means inconsistent with ostentatiousness: he is diligent enough to remind the world of his merit, and expresses with very little scruple his high opinion of his own powers; but his self-commendations are read without scorn or indignation; we allow his claims, and love his frankness.

Tradition, however, has not allowed that his confidence in himself exempted him
from

from jealousy of others. He is accused of envy and insidiousness; and is particularly charged with inciting Creech to translate Horace, that he might lose the reputation which Lucretius had given him.

Of this charge we immediately discover that it is merely conjectural; the purpose was such as no man would confess; and a crime that admits no proof, why should we believe?

He has been described as magisterially presiding over the younger writers, and assuming the distribution of poetical fame; but he who excels has a right to teach, and he whose judgement is incontestable may, without usurpation, examine and decide.

Congreve represents him as ready to advise and instruct; but there is reason to believe that his communciation was rather useful than entertaining. He declares of himself that he was saturnine, and not one of those whose spritely sayings diverted company; and one of his censurers makes him say,

Nor

Nor wine nor love could ever see me gay ;
 To writing bred, I knew not what to say.

There are men whose powers operate only at leisure and in retirement, and whose intellectual vigour deserts them in conversation ; whom merriment confuses, and objection disconcerts ; whose bashfulness restrains their exertion, and suffers them not to speak till the time of speaking is past ; or whose attention to their own character makes them unwilling to utter at hazard what has not been considered, and cannot be recalled.

Of Dryden's sluggishness in conversation it is vain to search or to guess the cause. He certainly wanted neither sentiments nor language ; his intellectual treasures were great, though they were locked up from his own use. *His thoughts, when he wrote, flowed in upon him so fast, that his only care was which to chuse, and which to reject.* Such rapidity of composition naturally promises a flow of talk, yet we must be content to believe what an enemy says of him, when he likewise says it of himself. But whatever was his character as a companion, it appears that

he lived in familiarity with the highest persons of his time. It is related by Carte of the duke of Ormond, that he used often to pass a night with Dryden, and those with whom Dryden conformed: who they were, Carte has not told; but certainly the convivial table at which Ormond sat was not surrounded with a plebeian society. He was indeed reproached with boasting of his familiarity with the great; and Horace will support him in the opinion, that to please superiours is not the lowest kind of merit.

The merit of pleasing must, however, be estimated by the means. Favour is not always gained by good actions or laudable qualities. Caresses and preferments are often bestowed on the auxiliaries of vice, the procurers of pleasure, or the flatterers of vanity. Dryden has never been charged with any personal agency unworthy of a good character: he abetted vice and vanity only with his pen. One of his enemies has accused him of lewdness in his conversation; but if accusation without proof be credited, who shall be innocent?

His

His works afford too many examples of dissolute licentiousness, and abject adulation; but they were probably, like his merriment, artificial and constrained; the effects of study and meditation, and his trade rather than his pleasure.

Of the mind that can trade in corruption, and can deliberately pollute itself with ideal wickedness for the sake of spreading the contagion in society, I wish not to conceal or excuse the depravity.—Such degradation of the dignity of genius, such abuse of superlative abilities, cannot be contemplated but with grief and indignation. What consolation can be had, Dryden has afforded, by living to repent, and to testify his repentance.

Of dramatick immorality he did not want examples among his predecessors, or companions among his contemporaries; but in the meanness and servility of hyperbolical adulation, I know not whether, since the days in which the Roman emperors were deified, he has been ever equalled, except by
Afra

Afra Behn in an address to Eleanor Gwyn. When once he has undertaken the task of praise, he no longer retains shame in himself, nor supposes it in his patron. As many odoriferous bodies are observed to diffuse perfumes from year to year, without sensible diminution of bulk or weight, he appears never to have impoverished his mint of flattery by his expences, however lavish. He had all the forms of excellence, intellectual and moral, combined in his mind, with endless variation; and when he had scattered on the hero of the day the golden shower of wit and virtue, he had ready for him, whom he wished to court on the morrow, new wit and virtue with another stamp. Of this kind of meanness he never seems to decline the practice, or lament the necessity: he considers the great as entitled to encomiastick homage, and brings praise rather as a tribute than a gift, more delighted with the fertility of his invention than mortified by the prostitution of his judgement. It is indeed not certain, that on these occasions his judgement much rebelled against his interest. There are minds which easily sink into submission, that look on grandeur with undistinguishing

undistinguishing reverence, and discover no defect where there is elevation of rank and affluence of riches.

With his praises of others and of himself is always intermingled a strain of discontent and lamentation, a sullen growl of resentment, or a querulous murmur of distress. His works are under-valued, his merit is unrewarded, and *he has few thanks to pay his stars that he was born among Englishmen.* To his criticks he is sometimes contemptuous, sometimes resentful, and sometimes submissive. The writer who thinks his works formed for duration, mistakes his interest when he mentions his enemies. He degrades his own dignity by shewing that he was affected by their censures, and gives lasting importance to names, which, left to themselves, would vanish from remembrance. From this principle Dryden did not oft depart; his complaints are for the greater part general; he seldom pollutes his page with an adverse name. X He condescended indeed to a controversy with Settle, in which he perhaps may be considered rather as assaulting than repelling; and since Settle is sunk into oblivion,

livion, his libel remains injurious only to himself.

Among answers to criticks, no poetical attacks, or altercations, are to be included; they are, like other poems, effusions of genius, produced as much to obtain praise as to obviate censure. These Dryden practised, and in these he excelled.

Of Collier, Blackmore, and Milbourne, he has made mention in the preface to his Fables. To the censure of Collier, whose remarks may be rather termed admonitions than criticisms, he makes little reply; being, at the age of sixty-eight, attentive to better things than the claps of a playhouse. He complains of Collier's rudeness, and the *horse-play of his raillery*; and asserts that *in many places he has perverted by his glosses the meaning of what he censures*; but in other things he confesses that he is justly taxed; and says, with great calmness and candour, *I have pleaded guilty to all thoughts or expressions of mine that can be truly accused of obscenity, immorality, or profaneness, and retract them. If he be my enemy, let him triumph; if he be my friend,*

friend, he will be glad of my repentance. Yet, as our best dispositions are imperfect, he left standing in the same book a reflection on Collier of great asperity, and indeed of more asperity than wit.

Blackmore he represents as made his enemy by the poem of *Abalom and Achitophel*, which *he thinks a little hard upon his fanatick patrons*; and charges him with borrowing the plan of his *Arthur* from the preface to Juvenal, *though he had*, says he, *the baseness not to acknowledge his benefactor, but instead of it to traduce me in a libel.*

The libel in which Blackmore traduced him was a *Satire upon Wit*; in which, having lamented the exuberance of false wit and the deficiency of true, he proposes that all wit should be recoined before it is current, and appoints masters of assay who shall reject all that is light or debased.

'Tis true, that when the coarse and worthless
drofs

Is purg'd away, there will be mighty loss;
Ev'n Congreve, Southern, manly Wycherley,
When thus refin'd, will grievous sufferers be;

Into

Into the melting-pot when Dryden comes,
 What horrid stench will rise, what noisome
 fumes !

How will he shrink, when all his lewd allay,
 And wicked mixture, shall be purg'd away !

Thus stands the passage in the last edition ;
 but in the original there was an abatement
 of the censure, beginning thus :

But what remains will be so pure, 'twill bear
 Th' examination of the most severe.

Blackmore, finding the censure resented,
 and the civility disregarded, ungenerously
 omitted the softer part. Such variations dis-
 cover a writer who consults his passions more
 than his virtue ; and it may be reasonably
 supposed that Dryden imputes his enmity to
 its true cause.

Of Milbourne he wrote only in general
 terms, such as are always ready at the call of
 anger, whether just or not : a short extract
 will be sufficient. *He pretends a quarrel to
 me, that I have fallen foul upon priesthood ; if
 I have, I am only to ask pardon of good priests,
 and am afraid his share of the reparation will
 come to little. Let him be satisfied that he*
 VOL. II. H *shall*

shall never be able to force himself upon me for an adversary; I contemn him too much to enter into competition with him.

As for the rest of those who have written against me, they are such scoundrels that they deserve not the least notice to be taken of them. Blackmore and Milbourne are only distinguished from the crowd by being remembered to their infamy.

Dryden indeed discovered, in many of his writings, an affected and absurd malignity to priests and priesthood, which naturally raised him many enemies, and which was sometimes as unreasonably resented as it was exerted. Trapp is angry that he calls the sacrificer in the *Georgicks* the *holy butcher*: the translation is indeed ridiculous; but Trapp's anger arises from his zeal, not for the author, but the priest; as if any reproach of the follies of paganism could be extended to the preachers of truth.

Dryden's dislike of the priesthood is imputed by Langbaine, and I think by Brown, to a repulse which he suffered when he solicited

licitated ordination; but he denies, in the preface to his Fables, that he ever designed to enter into the church; and such a denial he would not have hazarded, if he could have been convicted of falsehood.

Malevolence to the clergy is seldom at a great distance from irreverence of religion, and Dryden affords no exception to this observation. His writings exhibit many passages, which, with all the allowance that can be made for characters and occasions, are such as piety would not have admitted, and such as may vitiate light and unprincipled minds. But there is no reason for supposing that he disbelieved the religion which he disobeyed. He forgot his duty rather than disowned it. His tendency to profaneness is the effect of levity, negligence, and loose conversation, with a desire of accommodating himself to the corruption of the times, by venturing to be wicked as far as he durst. When he professed himself a convert to Popery, he did not pretend to have received any new conviction of the fundamental doctrines of Christianity.

The persecution of criticks was not the worst of his vexations; he was much more disturbed by the importunities of want. His complaints of poverty are so frequently repeated, either with the dejection of weakness sinking in endless misery, or the indignation of merit claiming its tribute from mankind, that it is impossible not to detest the age which could impose on such a man the necessity of such solicitations, or not to despise the man who could submit to such solicitations without necessity.

Whether by the world's neglect, or his own imprudence, I am afraid that the greatest part of his life was passed in exigencies. Such outcries were surely never uttered but in severe pain. Of his supplies or his expences no probable estimate can now be made. Except the salary of the Laureate, to which king James added the office of Historiographer, perhaps with some additional emoluments, his whole revenue seems to have been casual; and it is well known that he seldom lives frugally who lives by chance. Hope is al-

ways

*Wise &
true*

ways liberal, and they that trust her promises make little scruple of revelling to-day on the profits of the morrow.

Of his plays the profit was not great, and of the produce of his other works very little intelligence can be had. By discoursing with the late amiable Mr. Tonson, I could not find that any memorials of the transactions between his predecessor and Dryden had been preserved, except the following papers:

“ I do hereby promise to pay John Dryden, Esq; or order, on the 25th of March 1699, the sum of two hundred and fifty guineas, in consideration of ten thousand verses, which the said John Dryden, Esq; is to deliver to me Jacob Tonson, when finished, whereof seven thousand five hundred verses, more or less, are already in the said Jacob Tonson’s possession. And I do hereby farther promise, and engage myself, to make up the said sum of two hundred and fifty guineas three hundred pounds sterling to the said John Dryden, Esq; his executors, administrators, or assigns,

“ signs, at the beginning of the second im-
 “ preffion of the said ten thousand verses.

“ In witness whereof I have hereunto set
 “ my hand and seal, this 20th day of March,
 “ 169⁸.

“ Jacob Tonson.

“ Sealed and delivered, being first
 “ duly stampd, pursuant to the acts
 “ of parliament for that purpose,
 “ in the presence of

“ Ben. Portlock.

“ Will. Congreve.”

“ March 24th, 1698.

“ Received then of Mr. Jacob Tonson the
 “ sum of two hundred sixty-eight pounds
 “ fifteen shillings, in pursuance of an agree-
 “ ment for ten thousand verses, to be deliver-
 “ ed by me to the said Jacob Tonson,
 “ whereof I have already delivered to him
 “ about seven thousand five hundred, more
 “ or less; he the said Jacob Tonson being
 “ obliged to make up the foresaid sum of
 “ two hundred sixty-eight pounds fifteen
 “ shillings three hundred pounds, at the
 “ beginning

“ beginning of the second impressi^{on} of the
 “ fore^{said} ten thousand verses ;

“ I say, received by me

“ John Dryden.

“ Witne^{ss} Charles Dryden.”

Two hundred and fifty guineas, at
 1*l.* 1*s.* 6*d.* is 268*l.* 15*s.*

It is manifest from the dates of this contract, that it relates to the volume of Fables, which contains about twelve thousand verses, and for which therefore the payment must have been afterwards enlarged.

I have been told of another letter yet remaining, in which he desires Tonson to bring him money, to pay for a watch which he had ordered for his son, and which the maker would not leave without the price.

The inevitable consequence of poverty is dependence. Dryden had probably no recourse in his exigencies but to his bookseller. The particular character of Tonson I do not know ; but the general conduct of traders was much less liberal in those times

than in our own ; their views were narrower, and their manners grosser. To the mercantile ruggedness of that race, the delicacy of the poet was sometimes exposed. Lord Bolingbroke, who in his youth had cultivated poetry, related to Dr. King of Oxford, that one day, when he visited Dryden, they heard, as they were conversing, another person entering the house. “ This,” said Dryden, “ is Tonson. You will take care not to depart before he goes away ; for I have not completed the sheet which I promised him ; and if you leave me unprotected, I must suffer all the rudeness to which his resentment can prompt his tongue.”

What rewards he obtained for his poems, besides the payment of the bookseller, cannot be known : Mr. Derrick, who consulted some of his relations, was informed that his fables obtained five hundred pounds from the dutchess of Ormond ; a present not unsuitable to the magnificence of that splendid family ; and he quotes Moyle, as relating that forty pounds were paid by a musical society for the use of *Alexander's Feast*.

In

In those days the œconomy of government was yet unsettled, and the payments of the Exchequer were dilatory and uncertain: of this disorder there is reason to believe that the Laureat sometimes felt the effects; for in one of his prefaces he complains of those, who, being intrusted with the distribution of the Prince's bounty, suffer those that depend upon it to languish in penury.

Of his petty habits or slight amusements, tradition has retained little. Of the only two men whom I have found to whom he was personally known, one told me that at the house which he frequented, called Will's Coffee-house, the appeal upon any literary dispute was made to him; and the other related, that his armed chair, which, in the winter had a settled and prescriptive place by the fire, was in the summer placed in the balcony, and that he called the two places his winter and his summer seat. This is all the intelligence which his two survivors afforded me.

Of

Of one opinion he is very reasonably suspected, which will do him no honour in the present age, though in his own time, at least in the beginning of it, he was far from having it confined to himself. There is little doubt that he put confidence in the prognostications of judicial astrology. In the Appendix to the Life of Congreve is a narrative of some of his predictions wonderfully fulfilled; but I know not the writer's means of information, or character of veracity; and, without authority, it is useless to mention what is so unlikely to be true. That he had the configurations of the planets in his mind, and considered them as influencing the affairs of men, he does not forbear to hint.

The utmost malice of the stars is past.—

Now frequent *trines* the happier lights among,
And *bigb-rais'd Jove*, from his dark prison freed,
Those weights took off that on his planet hung,
Will gloriously the new-laid works succeed.

He has elsewhere shewn his attention to the planetary powers; and in the preface to his Fables has endeavoured obliquely to justify
his

his superstition, by attributing the same to some of the Ancients.

So slight and so scanty is the knowledge which I have been able to collect concerning the private life and domestick manners of a man, whom every English generation must mention with reverence as a critick and a poet.

DRYDEN

DRYDEN may be properly considered as the father of English criticism, as the writer who first taught us to determine upon principles the merit of composition. Of our former poets, the greatest dramatist wrote without rules, conducted through life and nature by a genius that rarely misled, and rarely deserted him. Of the rest, those who knew the laws of propriety had neglected to teach them.

Two *Arts of English Poetry* were written in the days of Elizabeth by Webb and Puttenham, from which something might be learned, and a few hints had been given by Jonson and Cowley; but Dryden's *Essay on Dramatick Poetry* was the first regular treatise on the art of writing.

He who, having formed his opinions in the present age of English literature, turns back to peruse this dialogue, will not perhaps find much increase of knowledge, or much novelty of instruction; but he is to remember that critical principles were then in the hands of a few, who had gathered them

them partly from the Ancients, and partly from the Italians and French. The structure of dramatick poems was not then generally understood. Audiences applauded by instinct, and poets perhaps often pleased by chance.

A writer who obtains his full purpose loses himself in his own lustre. Of an opinion which is no longer doubted, the evidence ceases to be examined. Of an art universally practised, the first teacher is forgotten. Learning once made popular is no longer learning; it has the appearance of something which we have bestowed upon ourselves, as the dew appears to rise from the field which it refreshes.

To judge rightly of an author, we must transport ourselves to his time, and examine what were the wants of his contemporaries, and what were his means of supplying them. That which is easy at one time was difficult at another. Dryden at least imported his science, and gave his country what it wanted before; or rather, he imported only the materials, and manufactured them by his own skill.

The

The dialogue on the Drama was one of his first essays of criticism, written when he was yet a timorous candidate for reputation, and therefore laboured with that diligence which he might allow himself somewhat to remit, when his name gave sanction to his positions, and his awe of the publick was abated, partly by custom, and partly by success. It will not be easy to find, in all the opulence of our language, a treatise so artfully variegated with successive representations of opposite probabilities, so enlivened with imagery, so brightened with illustrations. His portraits of the English dramatists are wrought with great spirit and diligence. The account of Shakspeare may stand as a perpetual model of encomiastick criticism; exact without minuteness, and lofty without exaggeration. The praise lavished by Longinus, on the attestation of the heroes of Maranthon, by Demosthenes, fades away before it. In a few lines is exhibited a character, so extensive in its comprehension, and so curious in its limitations, that nothing can be added, diminished, or reformed; nor can the editors and admirers of Shakspeare, in all their emulation of reverence,

verence, boast of much more than of having diffused and paraphrased this epitome of excellence, of having changed Dryden's gold for baser metal, of lower value though of greater bulk.

In this, and in all his other essays on the same subject, the criticism of Dryden is the criticism of a poet; not a dull collection of theorems, nor a rude detection of faults, which perhaps the censor was not able to have committed; but a gay and vigorous dissertation, where delight is mingled with instruction, and where the author proves his right of judgement, by his power of performance.

The different manner and effect with which critical knowledge may be conveyed, was perhaps never more clearly exemplified than in the performances of Rymer and Dryden. It was said of a dispute between two mathematicians, "*malim cum Scaligero errare, quam cum Clavio recte sapere;*" that *it was more eligible to go wrong with one than right with the other.* A tendency of the same kind every mind must feel at the perusal of Dryden's prefaces and Rymer's discourses.

discourses. With Dryden we are wandering in quest of Truth; whom we find, if we find her at all, drest in the graces of elegance; and if we miss her, the labour of the pursuit rewards itself; we are led only through fragrance and flowers: Rymer, without taking a nearer, takes a rougher way; every step is to be made through thorns and brambles; and Truth, if we meet her, appears repulsive by her mien, and ungraceful by her habit. Dryden's criticism has the majesty of a queen; Rymer's has the ferocity of a tyrant.

As he had studied with great diligence the art of poetry, and enlarged or rectified his notions, by experience perpetually increasing, he had his mind stored with principles and observations; he poured out his knowledge with great liberality, and seldom published any work without a critical dissertation, by which he encreased the book and the price, with little labour to himself; for of labour, notwithstanding the multiplicity of his productions, there is sufficient reason to suspect that he was not a lover. To write *con amore*, with fondness for the
10 employment,

employment, with perpetual touches and retouches, with unwillingness to take leave of his own idea, and an unwearied pursuit of unattainable perfection, was, I think, no part of his character.

His Criticism may be considered as general or occasional. In his general precepts, which depend upon the nature of things, and the structure of the human mind; he may doubtless be safely recommended to the confidence of the reader; but his occasional and particular positions were sometimes interested, sometimes negligent, and sometimes capricious. It is not without reason that Trapp, speaking of the praises which he bestows on Palamon and Arcite, says, “*Novimus judicium*
 “*Drydeni de poemate quodam Chauceri,*
 “*pulchro fane illo, et admodum laudando,*
 “*nimirum quod non modo vere epicum sit,*
 “*sed Iliada etiam atque Æneada æquet, imo*
 “*superet. Sed novimus eodem tempore*
 “*viri illius maximi non semper accuratissimas esse censuras, nec ad severissimam*
 “*critices normam exactas: illo judice id*
 “*plerumque optimum est, quod nunc præ*
 VOL. II. I “manibus

“manibus habet, & in quo nunc occupatur.”

He is therefore by no means constant to himself. His defence and desertion of dramatick rhyme is generally known. *Spence*, in his remarks on Pope's *Odyssey*, produces what he thinks an unconquerable quotation from Dryden's preface to the *Eneid*, in favour of translating an epick poem into blank verse; but he forgets that when his author attempted the *Iliad*, some years afterwards, he departed from his own decision, and translated into rhyme.

When he has any objection to obviate, or any license to defend, he is not very scrupulous about what he asserts, nor very cautious, if the present purpose be served, not to entangle himself in his own sophistries. But when all arts are exhausted, like other hunted animals, he sometimes stands at bay; as he cannot disown the grossness of one of his plays, he declares that he knows not any law that prescribes morality to a comick poet.

His

His remarks on ancient or modern writers are not always to be trusted. His parallel of the versification of Ovid with that of Claudian has been very justly censured by *Sewel*. His comparison of the first line of Virgil with the first of Statius is not happier. Virgil, he says, is soft and gentle, and would have thought Statius mad if he had heard him thundering out

Quæ superimposito moles geminata colosso.

Statius perhaps heats himself, as he proceeds, to exaggerations somewhat hyperbolic; but undoubtedly Virgil would have been too hasty, if he had condemned him to straw for one sounding line. Dryden wanted an instance, and the first that occurred was impressed into the service.

What he wishes to say, he says at hazard; he cited *Gorbuduc*, which he had never seen; gives a false account of *Chapman's* versification; and discovers, in the preface to his Fables, that he translated the first book of the Iliad, without knowing what was in the second.

It will be difficult to prove that Dryden ever made any great advances in literature. As having distinguished himself at Westminster under the tuition of Busby, who advanced his scholars to a height of knowledge very rarely attained in grammar-schools, he resided afterwards at Cambridge, it is not to be supposed that his skill in the ancient languages was deficient, compared with that of common students; but his scholastick acquisitions seem not proportionate to his opportunities and abilities. He could not, like Milton or Cowley, have made his name illustrious merely by his learning. He mentions but few books, and those such as lie in the beaten track of regular study; from which if ever he departs, he is in danger of losing himself in unknown regions.

In his Dialogue on the Drama, he pronounces with great confidence that the Latin tragedy of Medea is not Ovid's, because it is not sufficiently interesting and pathetick. He might have determined the question upon surer evidence; for it is quoted by Quintilian

tilian as the work of Seneca; and the only line which remains of Ovid's play, for one line is left us, is not there to be found. There was therefore no need of the gravity of conjecture, or the discussion of plot or sentiment, to find what was already known upon higher authority than such discussions can ever reach.

His literature, though not always free from ostentation, will be commonly found either obvious, and made his own by the art of dressing it; or superficial, which, by what he gives, shews what he wanted; or erroneous, hastily collected, and negligently scattered.

Yet it cannot be said that his genius is ever unprovided of matter, or that his fancy languishes in penury of ideas. His works abound with knowledge, and sparkle with illustrations. There is scarcely any science or faculty that does not supply him with occasional images and lucky similitudes; every page discovers a mind very widely acquainted both with art and nature, and in full possession of great stores of intel-

lectual wealth. Of him that knows much, it is natural to suppose that he has read with diligence; yet I rather believe that the knowledge of Dryden was gleaned from accidental intelligence and various conversation, by a quick apprehension, a judicious selection, and a happy memory, a keen appetite of knowledge, and a powerful digestion; by vigilance that permitted nothing to pass without notice, and a habit of reflection that suffered nothing useful to be lost. A mind like Dryden's, always curious, always active, to which every understanding was proud to be associated, and of which every one solicited the regard, by an ambitious display of himself, had a more pleasant, perhaps a nearer way, to knowledge than by the silent progress of solitary reading. I do not suppose that he despised books, or intentionally neglected them; but that he was carried out, by the impetuosity of his genius, to more vivid and speedy instructors; and that his studies were rather desultory and fortuitous than constant and systematical.

It must be confessed that he scarcely ever appears to want book-learning but when he
mentions

mentions books ; and to him may be transferred the praise which he gives his master Charles.

His conversation, wit, and parts,
 His knowledge in the noblest useful arts,
 Were such, dead authors could not give,
 But habitudes of those that live;
 Who, lighting him, did greater lights receive :
 He drain'd from all, and all they knew,
 His apprehension quick, his judgement true :
 That the most learn'd with shame confess
 His knowledge more, his reading only less.

Of all this, however, if the proof be demanded, I will not undertake to give it ; the atoms of probability, of which my opinion has been formed, lie scattered over all his works ; and by him who thinks the question worth his notice, his works must be perused with very close attention.

Criticism, either didactick or defensive, occupies almost all his prose, except those pages which he has devoted to his patrons ; but none of his prefaces were ever thought tedious. They have not the formality of a settled style, in which the first half of the sentence betrays the other. The clauses are

never balanced, nor the periods modelled; every word seems to drop by chance, though it falls into its proper place. Nothing is cold or languid; the whole is airy, animated, and vigorous; what is little is gay; what is great, is splendid. He may be thought to mention himself too frequently; but while he forces himself upon our esteem, we cannot refuse him to stand high in his own. Every thing is excused by the play of images and the spriteliness of expression. Though all is easy, nothing is feeble; though all seems careless, there is nothing harsh; and though, since his earlier works, more than a century has passed, they have nothing yet uncouth or obsolete.

He who writes much, will not easily escape a manner, such a recurrence of particular modes as may be easily noted. Dryden is always *another and the same*, he does not exhibit a second time the same elegancies in the same form, nor appears to have any art other than that of expressing with clearness what he thinks with vigour. His style could not easily be imitated, either seriously or ludicrously; for, being always equable and always

2

varied,

varied, it has no prominent or discriminative characters. The beauty who is totally free from disproportion of parts and features, cannot be ridiculed by an overcharged resemblance.

From his prose, however, Dryden derives only his accidental and secondary praise; the veneration with which his name is pronounced by every cultivator of English literature, is paid to him as he refined the language, improved the sentiments, and tuned the numbers of English Poetry.

After about half a century of forced thoughts, and rugged metre, some advances towards nature and harmony had been already made by Waller and Denham; they had shewn that long discourses in rhyme grew more pleasing when they were broken into couplets, and that verse consisted not only in the number but the arrangement of syllables.

But though they did much, who can deny that they left much to do? Their works were not many, nor were their minds of very
ample

ample comprehension. More examples of more modes of composition were necessary for the establishment of regularity, and the introduction of propriety in word and thought.

Every language of a learned nation necessarily divides itself into diction scholastick and popular, grave and familiar, elegant and gross; and from a nice distinction of these different parts, arises a great part of the beauty of style. But if we except a few minds, the favourites of nature, to whom their own original rectitude was in the place of rules, this delicacy of selection was little known to our authors; our speech lay before them in a heap of confusion, and every man took for every purpose what chance might offer him.

There was therefore before the time of Dryden no poetical diction, no system of words at once refined from the grossness of domestick use, and free from the harshness of terms appropriated to particular arts. Words too familiar, or too remote, defeat the purpose of a poet. From those sounds which

we hear on small or on coarse occasions, we do not easily receive strong impressions, or delightful images ; and words to which we are nearly strangers, whenever they occur, draw that attention on themselves which they should convey to things.

Those happy combinations of words which distinguish poetry from prose, had been rarely attempted ; we had few elegancies or flowers of speech, the roses had not yet been plucked from the bramble, or different colours had not been joined to enliven one another.

It may be doubted whether Waller and Denham could have over-born the prejudices which had long prevailed, and which even then were sheltered by the protection of Cowley. The new versification, as it was called, may be considered as owing its establishment to Dryden ; from whose time it is apparent that English poetry has had no tendency to relapse to its former savageness.

The affluence and comprehension of our language is very illustriously displayed in our
poetical

poetical translations of Ancient Writers ; a work which the French seem to relinquish in despair, and which we were long unable to perform with dexterity. Ben Jonson thought it necessary to copy Horace almost word by word ; Feltham, his contemporary and adversary, considers it as indispensably requisite in a translation to give line for line. It is said that Sandys, whom Dryden calls the best versifier of the last age, has struggled hard to comprise every book of his English Metamorphoses in the same number of verses with the original. Holyday had nothing in view but to shew that he understood his author, with so little regard to the grandeur of his diction, or the volubility of his numbers, that his metres can hardly be called verses ; they cannot be read without reluctance, nor will the labour always be rewarded by understanding them. Cowley saw that such copyers were a *servile race* ; he asserted his liberty, and spread his wings so boldly that he left his authors. It was reserved for Dryden to fix the limits of poetical liberty, and give us just rules and examples of translation.

When

When languages are formed upon different principles, it is impossible that the same modes of expression should always be elegant in both. While they run on together, the closest translation may be considered as the best; but when they divaricate, each must take its natural course. Where correspondence cannot be obtained, it is necessary to be content with something equivalent. *Translation therefore, says Dryden, is not so loose as paraphrase, nor so close as metaphor.*

All polished languages have different styles; the concise, the diffuse, the lofty, and the humble. In the proper choice of style consists the resemblance which Dryden principally exacts from the translator. He is to exhibit his author's thoughts in such a dress of diction as the author would have given them, had his language been English: rugged magnificence is not to be softened: hyperbolical ostentation is not to be repressed, nor sententious affectation to have its points blunted. A translator is to be like his author: it is not his business to excel him.

The

The reasonableness of these rules seems sufficient for their vindication ; and the effects produced by observing them were so happy, that I know not whether they were ever opposed but by Sir Edward Sherburne, a man whose learning was greater than his powers of poetry ; and who, being better qualified to give the meaning than the spirit of Seneca, has introduced his version of three tragedies by a defence of close translation. The authority of Horace, which the new translators cited in defence of their practice, he has, by a judicious explanation, taken fairly from them ; but reason wants not Horace to support it.

It seldom happens that all the necessary causes concur to any great effect : will is wanting to power, or power to will, or both are impeded by external obstructions. The exigencies in which Dryden was condemned to pass his life, are reasonably supposed to have blasted his genius, to have driven out his works in a state of immaturity, and to have intercepted the full-blown elegance which longer growth would have supplied.

Poverty,

Poverty, like other rigid powers, is sometimes too hastily accused. If the excellence of Dryden's works was lessened by his indigence, their number was increased; and I know not how it will be proved, that if he had written less he would have written better; or that indeed he would have undergone the toil of an author, if he had not been solicited by something more pressing than the love of praise.

But as is said by his Sebastian,

What had been, is unknown; what is, appears.

We know that Dryden's several productions were so many successive expedients for his support; his plays were therefore often borrowed, and his poems were almost all occasional.

In an occasional performance no height of excellence can be expected from any mind, however fertile in itself, and however stored with acquisitions. He whose work is general and arbitrary, has the choice of his matter, and takes that which his inclination
and

and his studies have best qualified him to display and decorate. He is at liberty to delay his publication, till he has satisfied his friends and himself; till he has reformed his first thoughts by subsequent examination; and polished away those faults which the precipitance of ardent composition is likely to leave behind it. Virgil is related to have poured out a great number of lines in the morning, and to have passed the day in reducing them to fewer.

The occasional poet is circumscribed by the narrowness of his subject. Whatever can happen to man has happened so often, that little remains for fancy or invention. We have been all born; we have most of us been married; and so many have died before us, that our deaths can supply but few materials for a poet. In the fate of princes the publick has an interest; and what happens to them of good or evil, the poets have always considered as business for the Muse. But after so many inaugural gratulations, nuptial hymns, and funeral dirges, he must be highly favoured by nature, or by fortune, who says any thing not said before. Even
war

war and conquest, however splendid, suggest no new images ; the triumphal chariot of a victorious monarch can be decked only with those ornaments that have graced his predecessors.

Not only matter but time is wanting. The poem must not be delayed till the occasion is forgotten. The lucky moments of animated imagination cannot be attended ; elegancies and illustrations cannot be multiplied by gradual accumulation : the composition must be dispatched while conversation is yet busy, and admiration fresh ; and haste is to be made, lest some other event should lay hold upon mankind.

Occasional compositions may however secure to a writer the praise both of learning and facility ; for they cannot be the effect of long study, and must be furnished immediately from the treasures of the mind.

The death of Cromwell was the first publick event which called forth Dryden's poetical powers. His heroick stanzas have beauties and defects ; the thoughts are vigorous, and though not always proper, shew
Vol. II. K a mind

a mind replete with ideas ; the numbers are smooth, and the diction, if not altogether correct, is elegant and easy.

Davenant seems at this time to have been his favourite author, though Gondibert never appears to have been popular ; and from Davenant he learned to please his ear with the stanza of four lines alternately rhymed.

Dryden very early formed his versification : there are in this early production no traces of Donne's or Jonson's ruggedness ; but he did not so soon free his mind from the ambition of forced conceits. In his verses on the Restoration, he says of the King's exile,

He, toss'd by Fate—

Could taste no sweets of youth's desired age,
But found his life too true a pilgrimage.

And afterwards, to shew how virtue and wisdom are increased by adversity, he makes this remark :

Well might the ancient poets then confer
On Night the honour'd name of *counsellor*,
Since, struck with rays of prosperous fortune
blind,
We light alone in dark afflictions find.

His

His praise of Monk's dexterity comprises
such a cluster of thoughts unallied to one
another, as will not elsewhere be easily found:

'Twas Monk, whom Providence design'd to
loose
Those real bonds false freedom did impose.
The blessed saints that watch'd this turning
scene;
Did from their stars with joyful wonder lean,
To see small clues draw vastest weights along,
Not in their bulk, but in their order strong.
Thus pencils can by one slight touch restore
Smiles to that changed face that wept before.
With ease such fond chimæras we pursue,
As fancy frames for fancy to subdue:
But, when 'ourselves to action we betake,
It shuns the mint like gold that chymists make:
How hard was then his task, at once to be
What in the body natural we see!
Man's Architect distinctly did ordain
The charge of muscles, nerves, and of the brain;
Through viewless conduits spirits to dispense
The springs of motion from the seat of sense.
'Twas not the hasty product of a day,
But the well-ripen'd fruit of wise delay.
He, like a patient angler, ere he strook,
Would let them play a-while upon the hook.

Our healthful food the stomach labours thus,
 At first embracing what it straight doth crush.
 Wife leaches will not vain receipts obtrude,
 While growing pains pronounce the humours
 crude ;

Deaf to complaints, they wait upon the ill,
 Till some safe crisis authorize their skill.

He had not yet learned, indeed he never
 learned well, to forbear the improper use of
 mythology. After having rewarded the
 heathen deities for their care,

With *Alga* who the sacred altar strows ?
 To all the sea-gods Charles an offering owes ;
 A bull to thee, Portunus, shall be slain ;
 A ram to you, ye Tempests of the Main.

He tells us, in the language of religion,

Prayer storm'd the skies, and ravish'd Charles
 from thence,
 As heaven itself is took by violence.

And afterwards mentions one of the most
 awful passages of Sacred History.

Other conceits there are, too curious to
 be quite omitted; as,

For by example most we sinn'd before,
 And, glass-like, clearness mix'd with frailty bore.

How

How far he was yet from thinking it necessary to found his sentiments on Nature, appears from the extravagance of his fictions and hyperboles :

The winds, that never moderation knew,
 Afraid to blow too much, too faintly blew ;
 Or, out of breath with joy, could not enlarge
 Their straiten'd lungs.—

It is no longer motion cheats your view ;
 As you meet it, the land approacheth you ;
 The land returns, and in the white it wears
 The marks of penitence and sorrow bears.

I know not whether this fancy, however little be its value, was not borrowed. A French poet read to Malherbe some verses, in which he represents France as moving out of its place to receive the king. “ Though
 “ this,” said Malherbe, “ was in my time,
 “ I do not remember it.”

His poem on the *Coronation* has a more even tenour of thought. Some lines deserve to be quoted :

You have already quench'd sedition's brand,
 And zeal, that burnt it, only warms the land ;
 The jealous sects that durst not trust their cause
 So far from their own will as to the laws,

Him for their umpire, and their synod take,
And their appeal alone to Cæsar make.

Here may be found one particle of that
old verification, of which, I believe, in all
his works, there is not another :

Nor is it duty, or our hope alone,
Creates that joy, but full *fruition*.

In the verses to the lord chancellor Clarendon, two years afterwards, is a conceit so hopeless at the first view, that few would have attempted it; and so successfully laboured, that though at last it gives the mind more perplexity than pleasure, and seems hardly worth the study that it costs, yet it must be valued as a proof of a mind at once subtle and comprehensive :

In open prospect nothing bounds our eye,
Until the earth seems join'd unto the sky :
So in this hemisphere our outmost view
Is only bounded by our king and you :
Our sight is limited where you are join'd,
And beyond that no farther heaven can find.
So well your virtues do with his agree,
That, though your orbs of different greatness be,
Yet both are for each other's use dispos'd,
His to enclose, and yours to be enclos'd.
Nor could another in your room have been,
Except an emptiness had come between.

The

The comparifon of the Chancellor to the Indies leaves all refemblance too far behind it:

And as the Indies were not found before
 Thofe rich perfumes which from the happy fhore
 The winds upon their balmy wings convey'd,
 Whofe guilty fweetnefs firft their world betray'd;
 So by your counfels we are brought to view
 A new and undiscover'd world in you,

There is another comparifon, for there is little elfe in the poem, of which, though perhaps it cannot be explained into plain profaick meaning, the mind perceives enough to be delighted, and readily forgives its obfcurity, for its magnificence;

How strangely active are the arts of peace,
 Whofe reftlefs motions lefs than wars do ceafe;
 Peace is not freed from labour, but from noife;
 And war more force, but not more pains employs:

Such is the mighty fwiftnefs of your mind,
 That, like the earth's, it leaves our fenfe behind,
 While you fo fmoothly turn and rowl our fphere,
 That rapid motion does but reft appear.
 For as in nature's fwiftnefs, with the throng
 Of flying orbs while ours is borne along,

All seems at rest to the deluded eye,
 Mov'd by the soul of the same harmony :
 So carry'd on by our unwearied care,
 We rest in peace, and yet in motion share.

To this succeed four lines, which perhaps afford Dryden's first attempt at those penetrating remarks on human nature, for which he seems to have been peculiarly formed :

Let envy then those crimes within you see,
 From which the happy never must be free;
 Envy that does with misery reside,
 The joy and the revenge of ruin'd pride.

Into this poem he seems to have collected all his powers; and after this he did not often bring upon his anvil such stubborn and unmanageable thoughts; but, as a specimen of his abilities to unite the most unsofiable matter, he has concluded with lines, of which I think not myself obliged to tell the meaning:

Yet unimpair'd with labours, or with time,
 Your age but seems to a new youth to climb.
 Thus heavenly bodies do our time beget,
 And measure change, but share no part of it;
 And still it shall without a weight increase,
 Like this new year, whose motions never cease.

For

For since the glorious course you have begun
Is led by Charles, as that is by the sun,
It must both weightless and immortal prove,
Because the centre of it is above.

In the *Annus Mirabilis* he returned to the quatrain, which from that time he totally quitted, perhaps from this experience of its inconvenience. This is one of his greatest attempts. He had subjects equal to his abilities, a great naval war, and the Fire of London. Battles have always been described in heroick poetry; but a sea-fight and artillery had yet something of novelty. New arts are long in the world before poets describe them; for they borrow every thing from their predecessors, and commonly derive very little from nature or from life. Boileau was the first French writer that had ever hazarded in verse the mention of modern war, or the effects of gunpowder. We, who are less afraid of novelty, had already possession of those dreadful images: Waller had described a sea-fight. Milton had not yet transferred the invention of fire-arms to the rebellious angels.

This

This poem is written with great diligence, yet does not fully answer the expectation raised by such subjects and such a writer. With the stanza of Davenant he has sometimes his vein of parenthesis, and incidental disquisition, and stops his narrative for a wise remark.

The general fault is, that he affords more sentiment than description, and does not so much impress scenes upon the fancy, as deduce consequences and make comparisons.

The initial stanzas have rather too much resemblance to the first lines of Waller's poem on the war with Spain ; perhaps such a beginning is natural, and could not be avoided without affectation. Both Waller and Dryden might take their hint from the poem on the civil war of Rome, *Orbem jam totum, &c.*

Of the king collecting his navy, he says,

It seems as every ship their sovereign knows,

His awful summons they so soon obey ;

So hear the scaly herds when Proteus blows,

And so to pasture follow through the sea.

It

It would not be hard to believe that Dryden had written the two first lines seriously, and that some wag had added the two latter in burlesque. Who would expect the lines that immediately follow, which are indeed perhaps indecently hyperbolical, but certainly in a mode totally different?

To see this fleet upon the ocean move,
 Angels drew wide the curtains of the skies;
 And heaven, as if there wanted lights above,
 For tapers made two glaring comets rise.

The description of the attempt at Bergen will afford a very compleat specimen of the descriptions in this poem :

And now approach'd their fleet from India,
 fraught

With all the riches of the rising sun :

And precious sand from southern climates
 brought,

The fatal regions where the war begun.

Like hunted castors, conscious of their store,
 Their way-laid wealth to Norway's coast they
 bring :

Then first the North's cold bosom spices bore,
 And winter brooded on the eastern spring.

By the rich scent we found our perfum'd prey,
Which, flank'd with rocks, did close in covert
lie :

And round about their murdering cannon lay,
At once to threaten and invite the eye.

Fiercer than cannon, and than rocks more hard,
The English undertake th' unequal war :
Seven ships alone, by which the port is barr'd,
Besiege the Indies, and all Denmark dare.

These fight like husbands, but like lovers those :
These fain would keep, and those more fain
enjoy :

And to such height their frantic passion grows,
That what both love, both hazard to destroy :

Amidst whole heaps of spices lights a ball,
And now their odours arm'd against them
fly :

Some preciously by shatter'd porcelain fall,
And some by aromatic splinters die.

And though by tempests of the prize bereft,
In heaven's inclemency some ease we find:
Our foes we vanquish'd by our valour left,
And only yielded to the seas and wind.

In this manner is the sublime too often
mingled with the ridiculous. The Dutch
seek a shelter for a wealthy fleet : this surely
needed no illustration ; yet they must fly, not
like all the rest of mankind on the same oc-
casion,

caſion, but *like bunted caſtors*; and they might with ſtrict propriety be hunted; for we winded them by our noſes—their *per-fumes* betrayed them. The *Huſband* and the *Lover*, though of more dignity than the *Caſtor*, are images too domeſtick to mingle properly with the horrors of war. The two quatrains that follow are worthy of the author.

The account of the different ſenſations with which the two fleets retired, when the night parted them, is one of the faireſt flowers of Engliſh poetry.

The night comes on, we eager to purſue
The combat ſtill, and they aſham'd to leave:
Till the laſt ſtreaks of dying day withdrew,
And doubtful moon-light did our rage de-
ceive.

In th' Engliſh fleet each ſhip reſounds with joy,
And loud applauſe of their great leader's
fame :

In ſirry dreams the Dutch they ſtill deſtroy,
And, ſlumbering, ſmile at the imagin'd flame.

Not ſo the Holland fleet, who, tir'd and done,
Stretch'd on their decks like weary oxen lie;
Faint ſweats all down their mighty members
run,

(Vaſt bulks, which little ſouls but ill ſupply.)

In

In dreams they fearful precipices tread,
 Or, shipwreck'd, labour to some distant shore :
 Or, in dark churches, walk among the dead ;
 They wake with horror, and dare sleep no
 more.

It is a general rule in poetry, that all appropriated terms of art should be sunk in general expressions, because poetry is to speak an universal language. This rule is still stronger with regard to arts not liberal, or confined to few, and therefore far removed from common knowledge ; and of this kind, certainly, is technical navigation. Yet Dryden was of opinion that a sea-fight ought to be described in the nautical language ; *and certainly, says he, as those who in a logical disputation keep to general terms would hide a fallacy, so those who do it in any poetical description would veil their ignorance.*

Let us then appeal to experience ; for by experience at last we learn as well what will please as what will profit. In the battle, his terms seem to have been blown away ; but he deals them liberally in the dock :

So here some pick out bullets from the sides,
 Some drive old *okum* thro' each *seam* and rift :
 Their left-hand does the *calking-iron* guide,
 The rattling *mallet* with the right they lift.

With

With boiling pitch another near at hand
 (From friendly Sweden brought) the *seams*
instops :

Which, well laid o'er, the salt-sea waves with-
 stand,
 And shake them from the rising beak in
 drops.

Some the *gall'd* ropes with dawby *marling* blind,
 Or fear-cloth masts with strong *tarpawling*
 coats :

To try new *sbrouds* one mounts into the wind,
 And one below, their ease or stiffness notes.

I suppose here is not one term which every
 reader does not wish away.

His digression to the original and progress
 of navigation, with his prospect of the ad-
 vancement which it shall receive from the
 Royal Society, then newly instituted, may
 be considered as an example seldom equalled
 of seasonable excursion and artful return.

One line, however, leaves me discontent-
 ed; he says, that by the help of the philo-
 sophers,

Instructed ships shall fail to quick commerce,
 By which remotest regions are allied.—

Which :

Which he is constrained to explain in a note;
By a more exact measure of longitude. It had
 better become Dryden's learning and genius
 to have laboured science into poetry, and
 have shewn, by explaining longitude, that
 verse did not refuse the ideas of philosophy.

His description of the Fire is painted by
 resolute meditation, out of a mind better
 formed to reason than to feel. The conflagration
 of a city, with all its tumults of
 concomitant distress, is one of the most
 dreadful spectacles which this world can
 offer to human eyes; yet it seems to raise
 little emotion in the breast of the poet; he
 watches the flame coolly from street to street,
 with now a reflection, and now a simile, till
 at last he meets the king, for whom he
 makes a speech, rather tedious in a time so
 busy; and then follows again the progress of
 the fire.

There are, however, in this part some
 passages that deserve attention; as in the
 beginning:

The diligence of trades and noiseful gain
 And luxury more late asleep were laid;
 All was the night's, and in her silent reign
 No sound the rest of Nature did invade
 In this deep quiet—

The expression *All was the night's* is taken from Seneca, who remarks on Virgil's line,

Omnia noctis erant placida composita quiete,
that he might have concluded better,
Omnia noctis erant.

The following quatrain is vigorous and animated :

The ghosts of traytors from the bridge descend

With bold fanatick spectres to rejoice ;
About the fire into a dance they bend,

And sing their sabbath notes with feeble voice.

His prediction of the improvements which shall be made in the new city, is elegant and poetical, and, with an event which Poets cannot always boast, has been happily verified. The poem concludes with a simile that might have better been omitted.

Dryden, when he wrote this poem, seems not yet fully to have formed his versification, or settled his system of propriety.

From this time, he addicted himself almost wholly to the stage, to which, says he, my

genius never much inclined me, merely as the most profitable market for poetry. By writing tragedies in rhyme, he continued to improve his diction and his numbers. According to the opinion of *Harte*, who had studied his works with great attention, he settled his principles of versification in 1676, when he produced the play of *Aureng Zeb*; and according to his own account of the short time in which he wrote *Tyrannick Love*, and the *State of Innocence*, he soon obtained the full effect of diligence, and added facility to exactness.

Rhyme has been so long banished from the theatre, that we know not its effect upon the passions of an audience; but it has this convenience, that sentences stand more independent on each other, and striking passages are therefore easily selected and retained. Thus the description of Night in the *Indian Emperor*, and the rise and fall of empire in the *Conquest of Granada*, are more frequently repeated than any lines in *All for Love*, or *Don Sebastian*.

To search his plays for vigorous sallies, and sententious elegancies, or to fix the dates

of any little pieces which he wrote by chance, or by solicitation, were labour too tedious and minute.

His dramatic labours did not so wholly absorb his thoughts, but that he promulgated the laws of translation in a preface to the English Epistles of Ovid; one of which he translated himself, and another in conjunction with the Earl of Mulgrave.

Abſalom and Achitophel is a work ſo well known, that particular criticiſm is ſuperfluous. If it be conſidered as a poem political and controverſial, it will be found to compriſe all the excellencies of which the ſubject is ſuſceptible; acrimony of censure, elegance of praiſe, artful delineation of characters, variety and vigour of ſentiment, happy turns of language, and pleaſing harmony of numbers; and all theſe raiſed to ſuch a height as can ſcarcely be found in any other Engliſh compoſition.

It is not, however, without faults; ſome lines are inelegant or improper, and too many are irreligiouſly licentious. The original ſtructure of the poem was defective; allego-

ries drawn to great length will always break ; Charles could not run continually parallel with David.

The subject had likewise another inconvenience : it admitted little imagery or description, and a long poem of mere sentiments easily becomes tedious ; though all the parts are forcible, and every line kindles new rapture, the reader, if not relieved by the interposition of something that soothes the fancy, grows weary of admiration, and defers the rest.

As an approach to historical truth was necessary, the action and catastrophe were not in the poet's power ; there is therefore an unpleasing disproportion between the beginning and the end. We are alarmed by a faction formed out of many sects various in their principles, but agreeing in their purpose of mischief, formidable for their numbers, and strong by their supports, while the king's friends are few and weak. The chiefs on either part are set forth to view ; but when expectation is at the height, the king makes a speech, and

Henceforth a series of new times began.

Who can forbear to think of an enchanted castle, with a wide moat and lofty battlements, walls of marble and gates of brass, which vanishes at once into air, when the destined knight blows his horn before it?

In the second part, written by *Tate*, there is a long insertion, which, for poignancy of satire, exceeds any part of the former. Personal resentment, though no laudable motive to satire, can add great force to general principles. Self-love is a busy prompter.

The *Medal*, written upon the same principles with *Abalom and Achitophel*, but upon a narrower plan, gives less pleasure, though it discovers equal abilities in the writer. The superstructure cannot extend beyond the foundation; a single character or incident cannot furnish as many ideas, as a series of events, or multiplicity of agents. This poem therefore, since time has left it to itself, is not much read, nor perhaps generally understood, yet it abounds with touches both of humorous and serious satire. The picture of a man whose propensions to mischief are

L 3

such,

such, that his best actions are but inability of wickedness, is very skilfully delineated and strongly coloured.

Very good lines Power was his aim : but, thrown from that
 pretence,
 The wretch turn'd loyal in his own defence,
 And malice reconcil'd him to his Prince.
 Him, in the anguish of his soul, he serv'd ;
 Rewarded faster still than he deserv'd :
 Behold him now exalted into trust ;
 His counsels oft convenient, seldom just.
 Ev'n in the most sincere advice he gave,
 He had a grudging still to be a knave.
 The frauds he learnt in his fanatic years,
 Made him uneasy in his lawful gears :
 At least as little honest as he cou'd :
 And, like white witches, mischievously good.
 To this first bias, longingly, he leans ;
 And rather would be great by wicked means.

The *Tbrenodia*, which, by a term I am afraid neither authorized nor analogical, he calls *Augustalis*, is not among his happiest productions. Its first and obvious defect is the irregularity of its metre, to which the ears of that age, however, were accustomed. What is worse, it has neither tenderness nor dignity, it is neither magnificent nor pathetic. He seems to look round him for
 images

images which he cannot find, and what he has he distorts by endeavouring to enlarge them. He is, he says, *petrified with grief*; but the marble sometimes relents, and trickles in a joke.

The fons of art all med'cines try'd,
And every noble remedy apply'd;
With emulation each essay'd
His utmost skill; *nay more they pray'd*:
Was never losing game with better conduct
play'd.

He had been a little inclined to merriment
before upon the prayers of a nation for their
dying sovereign, nor was he serious enough
to keep heathen fables out of his religion,

With him th' innumerable croud of armed
prayers
Knock'd at the gates of heaven, and knock'd
aloud;

The first well-meaning rude petitioners,
All for his life assail'd the throne,
All would have brib'd the skies by offering up
their own.

So great a throng not heaven itself could bar;
'Twas almost borne by force as in the giants war.

The prayers, at least, for his reprieve were
heard;

His death, like Hezekiah's, was deferr'd.

There is throughout the composition a desire of splendor without wealth. In the conclusion he seems too much pleased with the prospect of the new reign to have lamented his old master with much sincerity.

He did not miscarry in this attempt for want of skill either in lyric or elegiac poetry. His poem *on the death* of Mrs. Killigrew, is undoubtedly the noblest ode that our language ever has produced. The first part flows with a torrent of enthusiasm, *Fervet immensusque ruit*. All the stanzas indeed are not equal. An imperial crown cannot be one continued diamond; the gems must be held together by some less valuable matter.

In his first ode for Cecilia's day, which is lost in the splendor of the second, there are passages which would have dignified any other poet. The first stanza is vigorous and elegant, though the word *diapason* is too technical, and the rhymes are too remote from one another.

From

From harmony, from heavenly harmony,
 This universal frame began :
 When nature underneath a heap of jarring atoms
 lay,
 And could not heave her head,
 The tuneful voice was heard from high,
 Arise ye more than dead.
 Then cold and hot, and moist and dry,
 In order to their stations leap,
 And musick's power obey.
 From harmony, from heavenly harmony,
 This universal frame began :
 From harmony to harmony
 Through all the compass of the notes it ran,
 The diapason closing full in man.

The conclusion is likewise striking, but
 it includes an image so awful in itself, that
 it can owe little to poetry ; and I could
 wish the antithesis of *musick untuning* had
 found some other place.

As from the power of sacred lays
 The spheres began to move,
 And sung the great Creator's praise
 To all the blest above.
 So when the last and dreadful hour
 This crumbling pageant shall devour,
 The trumpet shall be heard on high,
 The dead shall live, the living die,
 And musick shall untune the sky.

Of

Of his skill in Elegy he has given a specimen in his *Eleonora*, of which the following lines discover their author.

Though all these rare endowments of the mind
 Were in a narrow space of life confin'd,
 The figure was with full perfection crown'd;
 Though not so large an orb, as truly round:
 As when in glory, through the public place,
 The spoils of conquer'd nations were to pass,
 And but one day for triumph was allow'd,
 The consul was constrain'd his pomp to crowd;
 And so the swift procession hurry'd on,
 That all, though not distinctly, might be shown;
 So in the straiten'd bounds of life confin'd,
 She gave but glimpses of her glorious mind:
 And multitudes of virtues pass'd along;
 Each pressing foremost in the mighty throng,
 Ambitious to be seen, and then make room
 For greater multitudes that were to come.
 Yet unemploy'd no minute slipp'd away;
 Moments were precious in so short a stay.
 The haste of heaven to have her was so great,
 That some were single acts, though each com-
 pleat;
 And every act stood ready to repeat.

This piece, however, is not without its faults; there is so much likeness in the initial comparison, that there is no illustration. As a king would be lamented, Eleonora was lamented.

As

As when some great and gracious monarch dies,
 Soft whispers, first, and mournful murmurs rise
 Among the sad attendants ; then the sound
 Soon gathers voice, and spreads the news around,
 Through town and country, till the dreadful blast
 Is blown to distant colonies at last ;
 Who, then, perhaps, were offering vows in vain,
 For his long life, and for his happy reign :
 So slowly by degrees, unwilling fame
 Did matchless Eleonora's fate proclaim,
 Till publick as the loss the news became. }

This is little better than to say in praise
 of a shrub, that it is as green as a tree, or of
 a brook, that it waters a garden, as a river
 waters a country.

Dryden confesses that he did not know the
 lady whom he celebrates ; the praise being
 therefore inevitably general, fixes no im-
 pression upon the reader, nor excites any
 tendency to love, nor much desire of imita-
 tion. Knowledge of the subject is to the
 poet, what materials are to the architect.

The *Religio Laici*, which borrows its title
 from the *Religio Medici* of Browne, is almost
 the only work of Dryden which can be con-
 sidered as a voluntary effusion ; in this, there-
 fore, it might be hoped, that the full efful-
 gence

gence of his genius would be found. But unhappily the subject is rather argumentative than poetical: he intended only a specimen of metrical disputation.

And this unpolish'd rugged verse I chose,
As fittest for discourse, and nearest prose.

This, however, is a composition of great excellence in its kind, in which the familiar is very properly diversified with the solemn, and the grave with the humorous; in which metre has neither weakened the force, nor clouded the perspicuity of argument; nor will it be easy to find another example equally happy of this middle kind of writing, which, though prosaick in some parts, rises to high poetry in others, and neither towers to the skies, nor creeps along the ground.

Of the same kind, or not far distant from it, is the *Hind and Panther*, the longest of all Dryden's original poems; an allegory intended to comprize and to decide the controversy between the Romanists and Protestants. The scheme of the work is injudicious and incommodious; for what can be more absurd than that one beast should counsel another to rest her faith upon a pope and council? He seems well enough

enough skilled in the usual topicks of argument; endeavours to shew the necessity of an infallible judge, and reproaches the Reformers with want of unity; but is weak enough to ask, why since we see without knowing how, we may not have an infallible judge without knowing where.

The *Hind* at one time is afraid to drink at the common brook, because she may be worried; but walking home with the *Panther*, talks by the way of the *Nicene Fathers*, and at last declares herself to be the Catholic church.

This absurdity was very properly ridiculed in the *City Mouse* and *Country Mouse* of *Montague* and *Prior*; and in the detection and censure of the incongruity of the fiction, chiefly consists the value of their performance, which, whatever reputation it might obtain by the help of temporary passions, seems to readers almost a century distant, not very forcible or animated.

Pope, whose judgment was perhaps a little bribed by the subject, used to mention this poem as the most correct specimen of
Dryden's

Dryden's versification. It was indeed written when he had completely formed his manner, and may be supposed to exhibit, negligence excepted, his deliberate and ultimate scheme of metre.

We may therefore reasonably infer, that he did not approve the perpetual uniformity which confines the sense to couplets, since he has broken his lines in the initial paragraph.

A milk-white Hind, immortal and unchang'd,
Fed on the lawns, and in the forest rang'd;
Without unspotted, innocent within,
She fear'd no danger, for she knew no sin.
Yet had she oft been chac'd with horns and
hounds
And Scythian shafts, and many winged wounds
Aim'd at her heart; was often forc'd to fly,
And doom'd to death, though fated not to die.

These lines are lofty, elegant, and musical, notwithstanding the interruption of the pause, of which the effect is rather increase of pleasure by variety, than offence by ruggedness.

To the first part it was his intention, he says, *to give the majestick turn of heroick poesy;*
and

and perhaps he might have executed his design not unsuccessfully, had not an opportunity of satire, which he cannot forbear, fallen sometimes in his way. The character of a Presbyterian, whose emblem is the *Wolf*, is not very heroically majestic.

More haughty than the rest, the wolfish race	}
Appear with belly gaunt and famish'd face :	
Never was so deform'd a beast of grace.	}
His ragged tail betwixt his legs he wears,	
Close clapp'd for shame ; but his rough crest	
he rears,	
And pricks up his predestinating ears.	

His general character of the other sorts of beasts that never go to church, though sprightly and keen, has, however, not much of heroick poesy.

These are the chief ; to number o'er the rest,
 And stand like Adam naming every beast,
 Were weary work ; nor will the Muse describe
 A slimy-born, and sun-begotten tribe ;
 Who, far from steeples and their sacred sound,
 In fields their sullen conventicles found.
 These gross, half-animated, lumps I leave ;
 Nor can I think what thoughts they can conceive ;
 But if they think at all, 'tis sure no higher
 Than matter, put in motion, may aspire ;

Souls

Souls that can scarce ferment their mass of
 clay ;
 So droffy, so divisible are they,
 As would but serve pure bodies for allay :
 Such souls as shards produce, such beetle things
 As only buz to heaven with evening wings ;
 Strike in the dark, offending but by chance ;
 Such are the blindfold blows of ignorance.
 They know not beings, and but hate a name ;
 To them the Hind and Panther are the same.

One more instance, and that taken from
 the narrative part, where style was more in
 his choice, will show how steadily he kept
 his resolution of heroick dignity.

For when the herd, suffic'd, did late repair
 To ferney heaths, and to their forest laire,
 She made a mannerly excuse to stay,
 Proffering the Hind to wait her half the way :
 That, since the sky was clear, an hour of talk
 Might help her to beguile the tedious walk.
 With much good-will the motion was embrac'd,
 To chat awhile on their adventures past :
 Nor had the grateful Hind so soon forgot
 Her friend and fellow-sufferer in the plot.
 Yet, wondering how of late she grew estrang'd,
 Her forehead cloudy and her count'nance chang'd,
 She thought this hour th'occasion would present
 To learn her secret cause of discontent,

Which

Which well she hop'd, might be with ease re-
 dress'd, }
 Considering her a well-bred civil beast,
 And more a gentlewoman than the rest. }
 After some common talk what rumours ran,
 The lady of the spotted muff began.

The second and third parts he professes to have reduced to diction more familiar and more suitable to dispute and conversation; the difference is not, however, very easily perceived; the first has familiar and the two others have sonorous lines. The original incongruity runs through the whole; the king is now *Cæsar*, and now the *Lyon*; and the name *Pan* is given to the Supreme Being.

But when this constitutional absurdity is forgiven, the poem must be confessed to be written with great smoothness of metre, a wide extent of knowledge, and an abundant multiplicity of images; the controversy is embellished with pointed sentences, diversified by illustrations, and enlivened by sallies of invective. Some of the facts to which allusions are made, are now become obscure,

and perhaps there may be many satirical passages little understood.

As it was by its nature a work of defiance, a composition which would naturally be examined with the utmost acrimony of criticism, it was probably laboured with uncommon attention; and there are, indeed, few negligences in the subordinate parts. The original impropriety, and the subsequent unpopularity of the subject, added to the ridiculousness of its first elements, has sunk it into neglect; but it may be usefully studied, as an example of poetical ratiocination, in which the argument suffers little from the metre.

In the poem on *the Birth of the Prince of Wales*, nothing is very remarkable but the exorbitant adulation, and the insensibility of the precipice on which the king was then standing, which the laureate apparently shared with the rest of the courtiers. A few months cured him of controversy, dismissed him from court, and made him again a playwright and translator.

Of

Of Juvenal there had been a translation by Stapylton, and another by Holiday; neither of them is very poetical. Stapylton is more smooth, and Holiday's is more esteemed for the learning of his notes. A new version was proposed to the poets of that time, and undertaken by them in conjunction. The main design was conducted by Dryden, whose reputation was such that no man was unwilling to serve the Muses under him.

The general character of this translation will be given, when it is said to preserve the wit, but to want the dignity of the original. The peculiarity of Juvenal is a mixture of gaiety and stateliness, of pointed sentences and declamatory grandeur. His points have not been neglected; but his grandeur none of the band seemed to consider as necessary to be imitated, except *Creech*, who undertook the thirteenth satire. It is therefore perhaps possible to give a better representation of that great satirist, even in those parts which Dryden himself has translated, some passages excepted, which will never be excelled.

With Juvenal was published Persius, translated wholly by Dryden. This work, though like all the other productions of Dryden it may have shining parts, seems to have been written merely for wages, in an uniform mediocrity, without any eager endeavour after excellence, or laborious effort of the mind.

There wanders an opinion among the readers of poetry, that one of these satires is an exercise of the school. Dryden says that he once translated it at school; but not that he preserved or published the juvenile performance.

Not long afterwards he undertook perhaps the most arduous work of its kind, a translation of Virgil, for which he had shewn how well he was qualified by his version of the Pollio, and two episodes, one of Nisus and Euryalus, the other of Mezentius and Lausus.

In the comparison of Homer and Virgil, the discriminative excellence of Homer is
elevation

elevation and comprehension of thought, and that of Virgil is grace and splendor of diction. The beauties of Homer are therefore difficult to be lost, and those of Virgil difficult to be retained. The massy trunk of sentiment is safe by its solidity, but the blossoms of elocution easily drop away. The author, having the choice of his own images, selects those which he can best adorn: the translator must, at all hazards, follow his original, and express thoughts which perhaps he would not have chosen. When to this primary difficulty is added the inconvenience of a language so much inferior in harmony to the Latin, it cannot be expected that they who read the Georgick and the Eneid should be much delighted with any version.

All these obstacles Dryden saw, and all these he determined to encounter. The expectation of his work was undoubtedly great; the nation considered its honour as interested in the event. One gave him the different editions of his author, and another helped him in the subordinate parts. The arguments of the several books were given him by Addison.

The hopes of the publick were not disappointed. He produced, says Pope, *the most noble and spirited translation that I know in any language*. It certainly excelled whatever had appeared in English, and appears to have satisfied his friends, and, for the most part, to have silenced his enemies. Milbourne, indeed, a clergyman, attacked it; but his outrages seem to be the ebullitions of a mind agitated by stronger resentment than bad poetry can excite, and previously resolved not to be pleased.

His criticism extends only to the Preface, Pastorals, and Georgicks; and, as he professes, to give this antagonist an opportunity of reprisal, he has added his own version of the first and fourth Pastorals, and the first Georgick. The world has forgotten his book; but since his attempt has given him a place in literary history, I will preserve a specimen of his criticism, by inserting his remarks on the invocation before the first Georgick, and of his poetry, by annexing his own version.

Ver. 1. “ *What makes a plenteous harvest,*
 “ *when to turn, The fruitful soil, and when to*
 “ *sow the corn—It’s unlucky, they say, to*
 “ *stumble at the threshold, but what has a*
 “ *plenteous harvest to do here? Virgil would*
 “ *not pretend to prescribe rules for that*
 “ *which depends not on the husbandman’s*
 “ *care, but the disposition of Heaven altoge-*
 “ *ther. Indeed, the plenteous crop depends*
 “ *somewhat on the good method of tillage, and*
 “ *where the land’s ill manur’d, the corn,*
 “ *without a miracle, can be but indifferent;*
 “ *but the harvest may be good, which is its*
 “ *propereſt epithet, tho’ the husbandman’s*
 “ *ſkill were never ſo indifferent. The next*
 “ *ſentence is too literal, and when to plough*
 “ *had been Virgil’s meaning, and intelligible*
 “ *to every body; and when to ſow the corn,*
 “ *is a needleſs addition.”*

Ver. 3. “ *The care of ſheep, of oxen, and of*
 “ *kine, And when to geld the lambs, and ſheer*
 “ *the ſwine, would as well have fallen under*
 “ *the cura boum, qui cultus habendo ſit pecori,*
 “ *as Mr. D’s deduction of particulars.”*

Ver. 5. "*The birth and genius of the frugal
bee, I sing, Mæcenas, and I sing to thee.*"

"—But where did *experientia* ever signify
"*birth and genius?* or what ground was
"*there for such a figure in this place?* How
"*much more manly is Mr. Ogylby's version!*"

"What makes rich grounds, in what celestial
"signs,

"'Tis good to plough, and marry elms with
"vines.

"What best fits cattle, what with sheep agrees,
"And several arts improving frugal bees,
"I sing, *Mæcenas*.

"Which four lines, tho' faulty enough, are
"yet much more to the purpose than Mr.
"D's fix."

Ver. 22. "*From fields and mountains to my
"song repair. For patrium linguens nemus,
"saltusque Lycæi*—Very well explained!"

Ver. 23, 24. "*Inventor Pallas, of the fat-
"tening oil, Thou founder of the plough, and
"ploughman's toil! Written as if these had
"been Pallas's invention. The ploughman's
"toil's impertinent.*"

Ver. 25,

Ver. 25. “ — *The shroud-like cypress* —
 “ *Why shroud-like ? Is a cypress pull'd up*
 “ *by the roots, which the sculpture in the*
 “ *last Eclogue fills Silvanus's hand with, so*
 “ *very like a shroud ? Or did not Mr. D.*
 “ *think of that kind of cypress us'd often for*
 “ *scarves and hatbands at funerals formerly,*
 “ *or for widow's vails, &c. if so, 'twas a deep*
 “ *good thought.*”

Ver. 26. “ — *That wear the royal honours,*
 “ *and increase the year*—What's meant by in-
 “ *creasing the year ? Did the gods or goddesses*
 “ *add more months, or days, or hours to it ?*
 “ *Or how can arva tueri—signify to wear*
 “ *rural honours ? Is this to translate, or abuse*
 “ *an author ? The next couplet are borrow'd*
 “ *from Ogylby, I suppose, because less to the*
 “ *purpose than ordinary.*”

Ver. 33. “ *The patron of the world, and*
 “ *Rome's peculiar guard—Idle, and none of*
 “ *Virgil's, no more than the sense of the pre-*
 “ *cedent couplet ; so again, he interpolates*
 “ *Virgil with that and the round circle of the*
 “ *year to guide powerful of blessings, which thou*
 “ *strew'st around. A ridiculous Latinism,*

“ and an *impertinent addition* ; indeed the
 “ whole *period* is but one piece of *absurdity*
 “ and *nonsense*, as those who lay it with the
 “ *original* must find.”

Ver. 42, 43. “ *And Neptune shall resign*
 “ *the fasces of the sea.* Was he *consul* or *dic-*
 “ *tator* there ? *And watry virgins for thy bed*
 “ *shall strive.* Both *absurd interpolations.*”

Ver. 47, 48. “ *Where in the void of heaven*
 “ *a place is free.* Ah happy *D—n*, were *that*
 “ *place* for thee ! But where is *that void* ?
 “ Or what does our *translator* mean by it ?
 “ He knows what *Ovid* says *God* did, to pre-
 “ vent such a *void* in heaven ; perhaps, this
 “ was then forgotten : but *Virgil* talks more
 “ sensibly.”

Ver. 49. “ *The scorpion ready to receive thy*
 “ *laws.* No, he would not then have gotten
 “ *out of his way* so fast.”

Ver. 56. “ *The Proserpine affects her silent*
 “ *seat—*What made *her* then so *angry* with
 “ *Ascalaphus*, for preventing her return ?
 “ She was now mus'd to *Patience* under the
 “ *deter-*

“ *determinations of Fate, rather than fond of*
 “ *her residence.*”

Ver. 61, 2, 3. “ *Pity the poet's, and the*
 “ *ploughman's cares, Interest thy greatness in*
 “ *our mean affairs. And use thyself betimes to*
 “ *hear our prayers.* Which is such a wretch-
 “ *ed perversion of Virgil's noble thought as*
 “ *Vicars would have blush'd at; but Mr.*
 “ *Ogylby makes us some amends, by his*
 “ *better lines;*

“ *O wheresoe'er thou art, from thence incline,*
 “ *And grant assistance to my bold design!*
 “ *Pity with me, poor husbandmen's affairs,*
 “ *And now, as if translated, hear our prayers.*
 “ *This is sense, and to the purpose: the other,*
 “ *poor-mistaken stuff.*”

Such were the strictures of Milbourne, who found few abettors; and of whom it may be reasonably imagined, that many who favoured his design were ashamed of his insolence.

When admiration had subsided, the translation was more coolly examined, and found like all others, to be sometimes erroneous,
 and

and sometimes licentious. Those who could find faults, thought they could avoid them; and Dr. Brady attempted in blank verse a translation of the *Eneid*, which, when dragged into the world, did not live long enough to cry. I have never seen it; but that such a version there is, or has been, perhaps some old catalogue informed me.

With not much better success, Trapp, when his Tragedy and his Prelections had given him reputation, attempted another blank version of the *Eneid*; to which, notwithstanding the slight regard with which it was treated, he had afterwards perseverance enough to add the *Eclogues* and *Georgicks*. His book may continue its existence as long as it is the clandestine refuge of school-boys.

Since the English ear has been accustomed to the mellifluence of Pope's numbers, and the diction of poetry has become more splendid, new attempts have been made to translate Virgil; and all his works have been attempted by men better qualified to contend with Dryden. I will not engage myself in

an invidious comparison by opposing one passage to another; a work of which there would be no end, and which might be often offensive without use.

It is not by comparing line with line that the merit of great works is to be estimated, but by their general effects and ultimate result. It is easy to note a weak line, and write one more vigorous in its place; to find a happiness of expression in the original, and transplant it by force into the version: but what is given to the parts, may be subducted from the whole, and the reader may be weary, though the critick may commend. Works of imagination excel by their allurements and delight; by their power of attracting and detaining the attention. That book is good in vain, which the reader throws away. He only is the master, who keeps the mind in pleasing captivity; whose pages are perused with eagerness, and in hope of new pleasure are perused again; and whose conclusion is perceived with an eye of sorrow, such as the traveller casts upon departing day.

By his proportion of this predomination
I will consent that Dryden should be tried;
of

of this, which, in opposition to reason, makes Ariosto the darling and the pride of Italy; of this, which, in defiance of criticism, continues Shakspeare the sovereign of the drama.

His last work was his *Fables*, in which he gave us the first example of a mode of writing which the Italians call *refaccimento*, a renovation of ancient writers, by modernizing their language. Thus the old poem of *Boiardo* has been new-dressed by *Domenichi* and *Berni*. The works of Chaucer, upon which this kind of rejuvenescence has been bestowed by Dryden, require little criticism. The tale of the cock seems hardly worth revival, and the story of *Palamon* and *Arcite*, containing an action unsuitable to the times in which it is placed, can hardly be suffered to pass without censure of the hyperbolical commendation which Dryden has given it in the general Preface, and in a poetical Dedication, a piece where his original fondness of remote conceits seems to have revived.

Of the three pieces borrowed from Boccace, *Sigismunda* may be defended by the celebrity

brity of the story. *Theodore* and *Honorio*, though it contains not much moral, yet afforded opportunities of striking description. And *Cymon* was formerly a tale of such reputation, that, at the revival of letters, it was translated into Latin by one of the *Beroalds*.

Whatever subjects employed his pen, he was still improving our measures and embellishing our language.

In this volume are interspersed some short original poems, which, with his prologues, epilogues, and songs, may be comprised in Congreve's remark, that even those, if he had written nothing else, would have entitled him to the praise of excellence in his kind.

One composition must however be distinguished. The ode for *St. Cecilia's Day*, perhaps the last effort of his poetry, has been always considered as exhibiting the highest flight of fancy, and the exactest nicety of art. This is allowed to stand without a rival. If indeed there is any excellence beyond it,

in some other of Dryden's works that excellence must be found. Compared with the Ode on *Killigrew*, it may be pronounced perhaps superiour in the whole; but without any single part, equal to the first stanza of the other.

It is said to have cost Dryden a fortnight's labour; but it does not want its negligences: some of the lines are without correspondent rhymes; a defect, which I never detected but after an acquaintance of many years, and which the enthusiasm of the writer might hinder him from perceiving.

His last stanza has less emotion than the former; but is not less elegant in the diction. The conclusion is vitious; the musick of *Timotheus*, which *raised a mortal to the skies*, had only a metaphorical power; that of *Cecilia*, which *drew an angel down*, had a real effect: the crown therefore could not reasonably be divided.

IN a general survey of Dryden's labours, he appears to have a mind very comprehensive by nature, and much enriched with acquired knowledge. His compositions are the effects of a vigorous genius operating upon large materials.

The power that predominated in his intellectual operations, was rather strong reason than quick sensibility. Upon all occasions that were presented, he studied rather than felt, and produced sentiments not such as Nature enforces, but meditation supplies. With the simple and elemental passions, as they spring separate in the mind, he seems not much acquainted; and seldom describes them but as they are complicated by the various relations of society, and confused in the tumults and agitations of life.

piece
disqui
sition
of Dry
dens
mind

What he says of love may contribute to the explanation of his character :

Love various minds does variously inspire;
It stirs in gentle bosoms gentle fire,
Like that of incense on the altar laid;
But raging flames tempestuous souls invade;
Vol. II. N A fire

A fire which every windy passion blows,
With pride it mounts, or with revenge it glows.

Dryden's was not one of the *gentle bosoms*: Love, as it subsists in itself, with no tendency but to the person loved, and wishing only for correspondent kindness; such love as shuts out all other interest; the Love of the Golden Age, was too soft and subtle to put his faculties in motion. He hardly conceived it but in its turbulent effervescence with some other desires; when it was inflamed by rivalry, or obstructed by difficulties: when it invigorated ambition, or exasperated revenge.

He is therefore, with all his variety of excellence, not often pathetick; and had so little sensibility of the power of effusions purely natural, that he did not esteem them in others. Simplicity gave him no pleasure; and for the first part of his life he looked on *Otway* with contempt, though at last, indeed very late, he confessed that in his play *there was Nature, which is the chief beauty.*

We do not always know our own motives.
I am not certain whether it was not rather

the difficulty which he found in exhibiting the genuine operations of the heart, than a servile submission to an injudicious audience, that filled his plays with false magnificence. It was necessary to fix attention; and the mind can be captivated only by recollection, or by curiosity; by reviving former thoughts, or impressing new: sentences were readier at his call than images; he could more easily fill the ear with some splendid novelty, than awaken those ideas that slumber in the heart.

The favourite exercise of his mind was ratiocination; and, that argument might not be too soon at an end, he delighted to talk of liberty and necessity, destiny and contingency; these he discusses in the language of the school with so much profundity, that the terms which he uses are seldom understood. It is indeed learning, but learning out of place.

When once he had engaged himself in disputation, thoughts flowed in on either side: he was now no longer at a loss; he had always argument at command; *verbaque provisam rem*—give him matter for his verse, and he finds without difficulty verse for his matter.

In Comedy, for which he professes himself not naturally qualified, the mirth which he excites will perhaps not be found so much to arise from any original humour, or peculiarity of character nicely distinguished and diligently pursued, as from incidents and circumstances, artifices and surprizes ; from jests of action rather than of sentiment. What he had of humorous or passionate, he seems to have had not from nature, but from other poets ; if not always as a plagiarist, at least as an imitator.

*Bombast
used
with
propriety*

Next to argument, his delight was in wild and daring sallies of sentiment, in the irregular and excentrick violence of wit. He delighted to tread upon the brink of meaning, where light and darkness begin to mingle ; to approach the precipice of absurdity, and hover over the abyss of unideal vacancy. This inclination sometimes produced nonsense, which he knew ; as,

Move swiftly, fun, and fly a lover's pace,
Leave weeks and months behind thee in thy race.

Amariel flies

To guard thee from the demons of the air ;
My flaming sword above them to display,
All keen, and ground upon the edge of day.

And

And sometimes it issued in absurdities, of which perhaps he was not conscious :

Then we upon our orb's last verge shall go,
And see the ocean leaning on the sky;
From thence our rolling neighbours we shall
know,

And on the lunar world securely pry.

These lines have no meaning ; but may we not say, in imitation of Cowley on another book,

'Tis so like *sense* 'twill serve the turn as well ?

This endeavour after the grand and the new, produced many sentiments either great or bulky, and many images either just or splendid :

I am as free as Nature first made man,
Ere the base laws of servitude began,
When wild in woods the noble savage ran. }

—'Tis but because the Living death ne'er knew,
They fear to prove it as a thing that's new :
Let me th' experiment before you try,
I'll show you first how easy 'tis to die.

—There with a forest of their darts he strove,
And stood like *Capaneus* defying Jove ;
With his broad sword the boldest beating down,
While Fate grew pale lest he should win the town,

And turn'd the iron leaves of his dark book
To make new dooms, or mend what it mistook.

—I beg no pity for this mouldering clay ;
For if you give it burial, there it takes
Possession of your earth ;
If burnt, and scatter'd in the air, the winds
That strew my dust diffuse my royalty,
And spread me o'er your clime ; for where one
atom

Of mine shall light, know there Sebastian reigns.

Of these quotations the two first may be allowed to be great, the two latter only tumid.

Of such selection there is no end. I will add only a few more passages ; of which the first, though it may perhaps not be quite clear in prose, is not too obscure for poetry, as the meaning that it has is noble ;

No, there is a necessity in Fate,
Why still the brave bold man is fortunate ;
He keeps his object ever full in sight,
And that assurance holds him firm and right ;
True, 'tis a narrow way that leads to bliss,
But right before there is no precipice ;
Fear makes men look aside, and so their foot-
ing miss.

Of

Vice

Of the images which the two following citations afford, the first is elegant, the second magnificent; whether either be just, let the reader judge:

What precious drops are these,
Which silently each other's track pursue,
Bright as young diamonds in their infant-dew?

—Reign your castle—

—Enter, brave Sir; for when you speak the
word,

The gates shall open of their own accord;
The genius of the place its Lord shall meet,
And bow its towery forehead at your feet.

These bursts of extravagance, Dryden calls the *Dalilabs* of the Theatre; and owns that many noisy lines of Maxamin and Almanzor call out for vengeance upon him; but *I knew*, says he, *that they were bad enough to please, even when I wrote them.* There is surely reason to suspect that he pleased himself as well as his audience; and that these like the harlots of other men, had his love, though not his approbation.

He had sometimes faults of a less generous and splendid kind. He makes, like almost all other poets, very frequent use of Mythology, and sometimes connects religion and fable too closely without distinction.

He descends to display his knowledge with pedantick ostentation; as when, in translating Virgil, he says, *tack to the larboard*—and *veer starboard*; and talks, in another work, of *virtue spooming before the wind*. His vanity now and then betrays his ignorance;

They Nature's king through Nature's opticks
view'd;

Revers'd they view'd him lessen'd to their eyes.

He had heard of reversing a telescope, and unluckily reverses the object,

He is sometimes unexpectedly mean. When he describes the Supreme Being as moved by prayer to stop the Fire of London, what is his expression?

A hollow crystal pyramid he takes,

In firmamental waters dipp'd above,

Of this a broad *extinguisher* he makes,

And *hoods* the flames that to their quarry
frove.

When

When he describes the Last Day, and the decisive tribunal, he intermingles this image :

When rattling bones together fly,
From the four quarters of the sky.

It was indeed never in his power to resist the temptation of a jest. In his Elegy on Cromwell :

No sooner was the Frenchman's cause embrac'd,
Than the *light Monsieur* the grave *Don* out-weigh'd ;

His fortune turn'd the scale—

He had a vanity unworthy of his abilities ; to shew, as may be suspected, the rank of the company with whom he lived, by the use of French words, which had then crept into conversation ; such as *fraicheur* for coolness, *fougue* for turbulence, and a few more, none of which the language has incorporated or retained. They continue only where they stood first, perpetual warnings to future innovators.

These are his faults of affectation ; his faults of negligence are beyond recital. Such
is

*merits
of his
poetry*

is the unevenness of his compositions, that ten lines are seldom found together without something of which the reader is ashamed. Dryden was no rigid judge of his own pages; he seldom struggled after supreme excellence, but snatched in haste what was within his reach; and when he could content others, was himself contented. He did not keep present to his mind, an idea of pure perfection; nor compare his works, such as they were, with what they might be made. He knew to whom he should be opposed. He had more musick than Waller, more vigour than Denham, and more nature than Cowley; and from his contemporaries he was in no danger. Standing therefore in the highest place, he had no care to rise by contending with himself; but while there was no name above his own, was willing to enjoy fame on the easiest terms.

He was no lover of labour. What he thought sufficient, he did not stop to make better; and allowed himself to leave many parts unfinished, in confidence that the good lines would overbalance the bad. What he had once written, he dismissed from his thoughts;

thoughts ; and, I believe, there is no example to be found of any correction or improvement made by him after publication. The hastiness of his productions might be the effect of necessity ; but his subsequent neglect could hardly have any other cause than impatience of study.

What can be said of his versification, will be little more than a dilatation of the praise given it by Pope.

Waller was smooth ; but Dryden taught to join	}
The varying verse, the full-resounding line,	
The long majestic march, and energy	
divine.	

Some improvements had been already made in English numbers ; but the full force of our language was not yet felt ; the verse that was smooth was commonly feeble. If Cowley had sometimes a finished line, he had it by chance. Dryden knew how to chuse the flowing and the sonorous words ; to vary the pauses, and adjust the accents ; to diversify the cadence, and yet preserve the smoothness of his metre.

Of

Of Triplets and Alexandrines, though he did not introduce the use, he established it. The triplet has long subsisted among us. Dryden seems not to have traced it higher than to Chapman's Homer; but it is to be found in Phaer's Virgil, written in the reign of Mary, and in Hall's Satires, published five years before the death of Elizabeth.

The Alexandrine was, I believe, first used by Spenser, for the sake of closing his stanza with a fuller sound. We had a longer measure of fourteen syllables, into which the Eneid was translated by Phaer, and other works of the ancients by other writers; of which Chapman's Iliad was, I believe, the last.

The two first lines of *Phaer's* third Eneid will exemplify this measure:

When Asia's state was overthrown, and Priam's
kingdom stout,
All guiltless, by the power of gods above was
rooted out.

As these lines had their break, or *cæsura*,
always at the eighth syllable, it was thought,

in time, commodious to divide them; and quatrains of lines, alternately, consisting of eight and six syllables, make the most soft and pleasing of our lyrick measures; as,

Relentless Time, destroying power,
Which stone and brass obey,
Who giv'ft to every flying hour
To work some new decay.

In the Alexandrine, when its power was once felt, some poems, as *Drayton's Polyolbion*, were wholly written; and sometimes the measures of twelve and fourteen syllables were interchanged with one another. Cowley was the first that inserted the Alexandrine at pleasure among the heroick lines of ten syllables, and from him Dryden professes to have adopted it.

The Triplet and Alexandrine are not universally approved. *Swift* always censured them, and wrote some lines to ridicule them. In examining their propriety, it is to be considered that the essence of verse is regularity, and its ornament is variety. To write verse, is to dispose syllables and sounds harmonically by some known and settled rule; a
rule

*perhaps
it is to
write
Verse*

rule however lax enough to substitute similitude for identity, to admit change without breach of order, and to relieve the ear without disappointing it. Thus a Latin hexameter is formed from dactyls and spondees differently combined; the English heroick admits of acute or grave syllables variously disposed. The Latin never deviates into seven feet, or exceeds the number of seventeen syllables; but the English Alexandrine breaks the lawful bounds, and surprises the reader with two syllables more than he expected.

The effect of the Triplet is the same: the ear has been accustomed to expect a new rhyme in every couplet; but is on a sudden surprised with three rhymes together, to which the reader could not accommodate his voice, did he not obtain notice of the change from the braces of the margins. Surely there is something unskilful in the necessity of such mechanical direction.

Considering the metrical art simply as a science, and consequently excluding all casualty, we must allow that Triplets and Alexandrines, inserted by caprice, are interruptions

ruptions of that constancy to which science aspires. And though the variety which they produce may very justly be desired, yet to make our poetry exact, there ought to be some stated mode of admitting them.

But till some such regulation can be formed, I wish them still to be retained in their present state. They are sometimes grateful to the reader, and sometimes convenient to the poet. *Fenton* was of opinion that Dryden was too liberal and Pope too sparing in their use.

The rhymes of Dryden are commonly just, and he valued himself for his readiness in finding them; but he is sometimes open to objection.

It is the common practice of our poets to end the second line with a weak or grave syllable :

Together o'er the Alps methinks we fly,
Fill'd with ideas of fair *Italy*.

Dryden sometimes puts the weak rhyme in the first :

Laugh

Laugh all the powers that favour *tyranny*,
And all the standing army of the sky.

Sometimes he concludes a period or paragraph with the first line of a couplet, which, though the French seem to do it without irregularity, always displeases in English poetry.

The Alexandrine, though much his favourite, is not always very diligently fabricated by him. It invariably requires a break at the sixth syllable; a rule which the modern French poets never violate, but which Dryden sometimes neglected:

And with paternal thunder vindicates his throne.

Of Dryden's works it was said by Pope, that *he could select from them better specimens of every mode of poetry than any other English writer could supply*. Perhaps no nation ever produced a writer that enriched his language with such variety of models. To him we owe the improvement, perhaps the completion of our metre, the refinement of our language, and much of the correctness of
our

our sentiments. By him we were taught *sapere & fari*, to think naturally and express forcibly. He taught us, that it was possible to reason in rhyme. He shewed us the true bounds of a translator's liberty. What was said of Rome, adorned by Augustus, may be applied by an easy metaphor to English poetry embellished by Dryden, *lateritiam invenit, marmoream reliquit*, he found it brick, and he left it marble.

THE invocation before the Georgicks is here inserted from Mr. Milbourn's version, that, according to his own proposal, his verses may be compared with those which he censures.

What makes the richest *tilth*, beneath what signs
 To *plough*, and when to match your *elms* and *vines*;
 What care with *flocks* and what with *herds* agrees,
 And all the management of frugal *bees*,
 I sing, *Mæcen*as ! Ye immensely clear,
 Vast orbs of light which guide the rolling year ;
Bacchus, and mother *Ceres*, if by you
 We fat'ning *corn* for hungry *mast* pursue,
 If, taught by you, we first the *cluster* press,
 And *thin cold streams* with *spritely juice* refresh.
 Ye *fawns* the present *numens* of the field.
Wood nymphs and *fawns*, your kind assistance yield,
 Your gifts I sing ! and thou, at whose fear'd stroke
 From rending earth the fiery *courser* broke,
 Great *Neptune*, O assist my artful song !
 And thou to whom the woods and groves belong,
 Whose snowy heifers on her flow'ry plains
 In mighty herds the *Cæan Isle* maintains !
Pan, happy shepherd, if thy cares divine,
 E'er to improve thy *Mænalus* incline ;
 Leave thy *Lycæan wood* and *native grove*,
 And with thy lucky smiles our work approve !

Be

Be *Pallas* too, sweet oil's inventor, kind;
 And he, who first the crooked *plough* design'd!
Sylvanus, god of all the woods appear,
 Whose hands a new-drawn tender *cypress* bear!
 Ye *gods* and *goddeses* who e'er with love,
 Would guard our pastures, and our fields im-
 prove!

You, who new plants from unsown lands supply;
 And with condensing clouds obscure the sky,
 And drop 'em softly thence in fruitful showers,
 Assist my enterprize, ye gentler powers!

And thou, great *Cæsar*! though we know not
 yet

Among what gods thou'lt fix thy lofty seat,
 Whether thou'lt be the kind *tutelar god*
 Of thy own *Rome*; or with thy awful nod,
 Guide the vast world, while thy great hand
 shall bear

The fruits and seasons of the turning year,
 And thy bright brows thy mother's myrtles
 wear:

Whether thou'lt all the boundless ocean sway,
 And sea-men only to thyself shall pray,
Tibule, the farthest island, kneel to thee,
 And, that thou may'st her son by marriage be,
Tethys will for the happy purchase yield
 To make a *dowry* of her watry field;
 Whether thou'lt add to heaven a *brighter sign*,
 And o'er the *summer months* serenely shine;

Where between *Cancer* and *Erigone*,
There yet remains a spacious *room* for thee.
Where the hot *Scorpion* too his arms declines,
And more to thee than half his *arch* resigns;
Whate'er thou'lt be; for sure the realms below
No just pretence to thy command can show:
No such ambition sways thy vast desires,
Though *Greece* her own *Elysian fields* admires,
And now, at last, contented *Proserpine*
Can all her mother's earnest prayers decline.
Whate'er thou'lt be, O guide our gentle course,
And with thy smiles our bold attempts enforce;
With me th'unknowing *rustics'* wants relieve,
And, though on earth, our sacred vows receive!

MR. DRYDEN, having received from Rymer his *Remarks on the Tragedies of the last Age*, wrote observations on the blank leaves ; which, having been in the possession of Mr. Garrick, are by his favour communicated to the publick, that no particle of Dryden may be lost.

“ That we may the less wonder why pity
“ and terror are not now the only springs on
“ which our tragedies move, and that Shak-
“ speare may be more excused, Rapin con-
“ fesses that the French tragedies now all
“ run on the *tendre* ; and gives the reason,
“ because love is the passion which most
“ predominates in our souls, and that there-
“ fore the passions represented become insi-
“ pid, unless they are conformable to the
“ thoughts of the audience. But it is to be
“ concluded that this passion works not now
“ amongst the French so strongly as the other
“ two did amongst the ancients. Amongst
“ us, who have a stronger genius for writing,
“ the operations from the writing are much
“ stronger : for the raising of Shakspeare’s
“ passions is more from the excellency of
“ the words and thoughts, than the justness

“ of the occasion ; and if he has been able
 “ to pick single occasions, he has never
 “ founded the whole reasonably : yet, by the
 “ genius of poetry in writing, he has suc-
 “ ceeded.

“ Rapin attributes more to the *dictio*, that
 “ is, to the words and discourse of a tragedy,
 “ than Aristotle has done, who places them
 “ in the last rank of beauties ; perhaps, only
 “ last in order, because they are the last
 “ product of the design, of the disposition or
 “ connection of its parts ; of the characters,
 “ of the manners of those characters, and of
 “ the thoughts proceeding from those man-
 “ ners. Rapin’s words are remarkable : ’Tis
 “ not the admirable intrigue, the surprising
 “ events, and extraordinary incidents, that
 “ make the beauty of a tragedy ; ’tis the
 “ discourses, when they are natural and pas-
 “ sionate : so are Shakspeare’s.

“ The parts of a poem, tragick or hero-
 “ ick, are,

“ 1. The fable itself.

“ 2. The order or manner of its contri-
 “ vance, in relation of the parts to the whole.

“ 3. The

“ 3. The manners, or decency of the characters, in speaking or acting what is proper for them, and proper to be shewn by the poet.

“ 4. The thoughts which express the manners.

“ 5. The words which express those thoughts.

“ In the last of these, Homer excels Virgil; Virgil all other ancient poets; and Shakspeare all modern poets.

“ For the second of these, the order: the meaning is, that a fable ought to have a beginning, middle, and an end, all just and natural: so that that part, *e. g.* which is the middle, could not naturally be the beginning or end, and so of the rest: all depend on one another, like the links of a curious chain. If terror and pity are only to be raised, certainly this author follows Aristotle's rules, and Sophocles' and Euripides's example: but joy may be raised too, and that doubly; either by seeing a wicked man punished, or a good man at

“ last fortunate; or perhaps indignation, to
 “ see wickedness prosperous and goodness
 “ depressed: both these may be profitable
 “ to the end of tragedy, reformation of man-
 “ ners; but the last improperly, only as it
 “ begets pity in the audience: though Ari-
 “ stotle, I confess, places tragedies of this
 “ kind in the second form.

“ He who undertakes to answer this ex-
 “ cellent critique of Mr. Rymer, in behalf
 “ of our English poets against the Greek,
 “ ought to do it in this manner. Either by
 “ yielding to him the greatest part of what
 “ he contends for, which consists in this,
 “ that the *μῦθος*, *i. e.* the design and conduct
 “ of it, is more conducing in the Greeks to
 “ those ends of tragedy, which Aristotle and
 “ he propose, namely, to cause terror and
 “ pity; yet the granting this does not set
 “ the Greeks above the English poets.

“ But the answerer ought to prove two
 “ things: first, that the fable is not the
 “ greatest master-piece of a tragedy, though
 “ it be the foundation of it.

“ Secondly,

“ Secondly, That other ends as fuitable to
 “ the nature of tragedy may be found in the
 “ English, which were not in the Greek.

“ Aristotle places the fable first ; not *quoad*
 “ *dignitatem*, *sed quoad fundamentum* : for a
 “ fable, never so movingly contrived to those
 “ ends of his, pity and terror, will operate
 “ nothing on our affections, except the cha-
 “ racters, manners, thoughts, and words are
 “ fuitable.

“ So that it remains for Mr. Rymer to
 “ prove, that in all those, or the greatest
 “ part of them, we are inferior to Sophocles
 “ and Euripides : and this he has offered at,
 “ in some measure ; but, I think, a little
 “ partially to the ancients.

“ For the fable itself ; 'tis in the English
 “ more adorned with episodes, and larger
 “ than in the Greek poets ; consequently
 “ more diverting. For, if the action be but
 “ one, and that plain, without any counter-
 “ turn of design or episode, *i. e.* under-plot,
 “ how can it be so pleasing as the English,
 “ which

“ which have both under-plot and a turned
 “ design, which keeps the audience in expect-
 “ tation of the catastrophe? whereas in the
 “ Greek poets we see through the whole de-
 “ sign at first.

“ For the characters, they are neither so
 “ many nor so various in Sophocles and Eu-
 “ ripides, as in Shakspeare and Fletcher;
 “ only they are more adapted to those ends
 “ of tragedy which Aristotle commends to
 “ us, pity and terror.

“ The manners flow from the characters,
 “ and consequently must partake of their ad-
 “ vantages and disadvantages.

“ The thoughts and words, which are the
 “ fourth and fifth beauties of tragedy, are
 “ certainly more noble and more poetical in
 “ the English than in the Greek, which
 “ must be proved by comparing them, some-
 “ what more equitably than Mr. Rymer has
 “ done.

“ After all, we need not yield that the
 “ English way is less conducing to move pity
 “ and

“ and terror, because they often shew virtue
 “ oppressed and vice punished : where they
 “ do not both, or either, they are not to be
 “ defended.

“ And if we should grant that the Greeks
 “ performed this better, perhaps it may ad-
 “ mit of dispute, whether pity and terror are
 “ either the prime, or at least the only ends
 “ of tragedy.

“ ’Tis not enough that Aristotle has said
 “ so ; for Aristotle drew his models of tra-
 “ gedy from Sophocles and Euripides ; and,
 “ if he had seen ours, might have changed
 “ his mind. And chiefly we have to say
 “ (what I hinted on pity and terror, in the
 “ last paragraph save one), that the punish-
 “ ment of vice and reward of virtue are the
 “ most adequate ends of tragedy, because most
 “ conducing to good example of life. Now
 “ pity is not so easily raised for a criminal,
 “ and the ancient tragedy always represents
 “ its chief person such, as it is for an in-
 “ nocent man ; and the suffering of inno-
 “ cence and punishment of the offender is
 “ of the nature of English tragedy : contra-
 “ rily,

“ rily, in the Greek, innocence is unhappy
“ often, and the offender escapes. Then we
“ are not touched with the sufferings of any
“ sort of men so much as of lovers; and
“ this was almost unknown to the ancients :
“ so that they neither administered poetical
“ justice, of which Mr. Rymer boasts, so
“ well as we; neither knew they the best
“ common place of pity, which is love.

“ He therefore unjustly blames us for not
“ building on what the ancients left us; for
“ it seems, upon consideration of the pre-
“ mises, that we have wholly finished what
“ they began.

“ My judgement on this piece is this, that
“ it is extremely learned; but that the au-
“ thor of it is better read in the Greek than
“ in the English poets: that all writers
“ ought to study this critique, as the best
“ account I have ever seen of the ancients :
“ that the model of tragedy he has here given,
“ is excellent, and extreme correct; but
“ that it is not the only model of all tragedy,
“ because it is too much circumscribed in
“ plot, characters, &c. and lastly, that we
“ may

“ may be taught here justly to admire and
“ imitate the ancients, without giving them
“ the preference with this author, in preju-
“ dice to our own country.

“ Want of method in this excellent trea-
“ tise, makes the thoughts of the author
“ sometimes obscure.

“ His meaning, that pity and terror are to
“ be moved, is, that they are to be moved as
“ the means conducing to the ends of tra-
“ gedy, which are pleasure and instruction.

“ And these two ends may be thus distin-
“ guished. The chief end of the poet is to
“ please; for his immediate reputation de-
“ pends on it.

“ The great end of the poem is to instruct,
“ which is performed by making pleasure the
“ vehicle of that instruction; for poesy is
“ an art, and all arts are made to profit.
“ *Rapin.*

“ The pity, which the poet is to labour
“ for, is for the criminal, not for those or
“ him

“ him whom he has murdered, or who have
 “ been the occasion of the tragedy. The
 “ terror is likewise in the punishment of the
 “ same criminal ; who, if he be represented
 “ too great an offender, will not be pitied :
 “ if altogether innocent, his punishment will
 “ be unjust.

“ Another obscurity is, where he says So-
 “ phocles perfected tragedy by introducing
 “ the third actor ; that is, he meant, three
 “ kinds of action ; one company singing, or
 “ another playing on the musick ; a third
 “ dancing.

“ To make a true judgement in this com-
 “ petition betwixt the Greek poets and the
 “ English, in tragedy :

“ Consider, first, how Aristotle has de-
 “ fined a tragedy. Secondly, what he assigns
 “ the end of it to be. Thirdly, what he
 “ thinks the beauties of it. Fourthly, the
 “ means to attain the end proposed.

“ Compare the Greek and English tragick
 “ poets justly, and without partiality, ac-
 “ cording to those rules.

“ Then

“ Then secondly, consider whether Ari-
 “ stotle has made a just definition of tragedy ;
 “ of its parts, of its ends, and of its beau-
 “ ties ; and whether he, having not seen any
 “ others but those of Sophocles, Euripides,
 “ &c. had or truly could determine what all
 “ the excellences of tragedy are, and where-
 “ in they consist.

“ Next shew in what ancient tragedy was
 “ deficient : for example, in the narrowness
 “ of its plots, and fewness of persons, and
 “ try whether that be not a fault in the
 “ Greek poets ; and whether their excel-
 “ lency was so great, when the variety was
 “ visibly so little ; or whether what they
 “ did was not very easy to do.

“ Then make a judgement on what the
 “ English have added to their beauties : as,
 “ for example, not only more plot, but also
 “ new passions ; as, namely, that of love,
 “ scarce touched on by the ancients, except
 “ in this one example of Phædra, cited by
 “ Mr. Rymer ; and in that how short they
 “ were of Fletcher !

“ Prove also that love, being an heroick
 “ passion, is fit for tragedy, which cannot be
 “ denied, because of the example alledged of
 “ Phædra; and how far Shakspeare has out-
 “ done them in friendship, &c.

“ To return to the beginning of this en-
 “ quiry; consider if pity and terror be
 “ enough for tragedy to move: and I be-
 “ lieve, upon a true definition of tragedy, it
 “ will be found that its work extends far-
 “ ther, and that it is to reform manners, by
 “ a delightful representation of human life
 “ in great persons, by way of dialogue. If
 “ this be true, then not only pity and terror
 “ are to be moved, as the only means to bring
 “ us to virtue, but generally love to virtue
 “ and hatred to vice; by shewing the re-
 “ wards of one, and punishments of the
 “ other; at least, by rendering virtue always
 “ amiable, tho’ it be shewn unfortunate;
 “ and vice detestable, tho’ it be shewn tri-
 “ umphant.

“ If, then, the encouragement of virtue
 “ and discouragement of vice be the proper
 “ ends of poetry in tragedy, pity and terror,
 “ though

“ though good means, are not the only. For
 “ all the passions, in their turns, are to be
 “ set in a ferment : as joy, anger, love, fear,
 “ are to be used as the poet’s common-
 “ places ; and a general concernment for the
 “ principal actors is to be raised, by making
 “ them appear such in their characters, their
 “ words, and actions, as will interest the
 “ audience in their fortunes.

“ And if, after all, in a larger sense, pity
 “ comprehends this concernment for the
 “ good, and terror includes detestation for the
 “ bad, then let us consider whether the English
 “ have not answered this end of tragedy, as
 “ well as the ancients, or perhaps better.

“ And here Mr. Rymer’s objections against
 “ these plays are to be impartially weighed,
 “ that we may see whether they are of
 “ weight enough to turn the balance against
 “ our countrymen.

“ ’Tis evident those plays, which he ar-
 “ raigns, have moved both those passions in
 “ a high degree upon the stage.

“ To give the glory of this away from the
“ poet, and to place it upon the actors, seems
“ unjust.

“ One reason is, because whatever actors
“ they have found, the event has been the
“ same ; that is, the same passions have been
“ always moved : which shews, that there is
“ something of force and merit in the plays
“ themselves, conducing to the design of
“ raising these two passions: and suppose them
“ ever to have been excellently acted, yet
“ action only adds grace, vigour, and more
“ life, upon the stage ; but cannot give it
“ wholly where it is not first. But second-
“ ly, I dare appeal to those who have never
“ seen them acted, if they have not found
“ these two passions moved within them :
“ and if the general voice will carry it, Mr.
“ Rymer’s prejudice will take off his single
“ testimony.

“ This, being matter of fact, is reasonably
“ to be established by this appeal ; as if one
“ man says ’tis night, the rest of the world
“ conclude it to be day ; there needs no far-
“ ther argument against him, that it is so.

“ If he urge, that the general taste is de-
“ praved, his arguments to prove this can at
“ best but evince that our poets took not the
“ best way to raise those passions; but experi-
“ ence proves against him, that these means,
“ which they have used, have been success-
“ ful, and have produced them.

“ And one reason of that success is, in my
“ opinion, this, that Shakspeare and Fletcher
“ have written to the genius of the age and
“ nation in which they lived; for though
“ nature, as he objects, is the same in all
“ places, and reason too the same; yet the
“ climate, the age, the disposition of the
“ people, to whom a poet writes, may be so
“ different, that what pleased the Greeks
“ would not satisfy an English audience.

“ And if they proceeded upon a founda-
“ tion of truer reason to please the Atheni-
“ ans than Shakspeare and Fletcher to please
“ the English, it only shews that the Athe-
“ nians were a more judicious people; but
“ the poet's business is certainly to please
“ the audience.

“ Whether our English audience have
“ been pleased hitherto with acorns, as
“ he calls it, or with bread, is the next
“ question; that is, whether the means
“ which Shakspeare and Fletcher have used
“ in their plays to raise those passions before
“ named, be better applied to the ends by
“ the Greek poets than by them. And per-
“ haps we shall not grant him this wholly:
“ let it be granted that a writer is not to
“ run down with the stream, or to please
“ the people by their own usual methods,
“ but rather to reform their judgements, it
“ still remains to prove that our theatre needs
“ this total reformation.

“ The faults, which he has found in their
“ designs, are rather wittily aggravated in
“ many places than reasonably urged; and
“ as much may be returned on the Greeks,
“ by one who were as witty as himself.

“ 2. They destroy not, if they are granted,
“ the foundation of the fabrick; only take
“ away from the beauty of the symmetry:
“ for example, the faults in the character of
“ the King and No-king are not as he makes
“ them,

“ them, such as render him detestable, but
 “ only imperfections which accompany hu-
 “ man nature, and are for the most part ex-
 “ cused by the violence of his love; so
 “ that they destroy not our pity or con-
 “ cernment for him: this answer may be
 “ applied to most of his objections of that
 “ kind.

“ And Rollo committing many murders,
 “ when he is answerable but for one, is too
 “ severely arraigned by him; for it adds to
 “ our horror and detestation of the crimi-
 “ nal: and poetick justice is not neglected
 “ neither; for we stab him in our minds
 “ for every offence which he commits; and
 “ the point, which the poet is to gain on the
 “ audience, is not so much in the death
 “ of an offender as the raising an horror of
 “ his crimes.

“ That the criminal should neither be
 “ wholly guilty, nor wholly innocent, but
 “ so participating of both as to move both
 “ pity and terror, is certainly a good rule,
 “ but not perpetually to be observed; for
 “ that were to make all tragedies too much

"alike, which objection he foresaw, but has
 "not fully answered.

*wise
 remark
 in ancient
 to modern
 tragedy* "To conclude, therefore; if the plays
 of the ancients are more correctly plotted,
 ours are more beautifully written. And
 "if we can raise passions as high on worse
 foundations, it shews our genius in tra-
 gedy is greater; for, in all other parts of
 "it, the English have manifestly excelled
 "them."

THE original of the following letter is preserved in the Library at Lambeth, and was kindly imparted to the publick by the reverend Dr. Vyse.

Copy of an original Letter from John Dryden, Esq; to his sons in Italy, from a MS in the Lambeth Library, marked N^o 933. p. 56.

(Superscribed)

Al Illustrissimo Sig^{re}
Carlo Dryden Camariere
d' Honore A. S. S.

In Roma.

Franca per Mantoua.

“ Sept. the 3d, our style.

“ Dear Sons,

“ Being now at Sir William Bowyer's in
“ the country, I cannot write at large, be-
“ cause I find myself somewhat indisposed
“ with a cold, and am thick of hearing, ra-
“ ther worse than I was in town. I am glad
“ to find, by your letter of July 26th, your
“ style, that you are both in health; but

P 4

“ wonder

“ wonder you should think me so negligent
“ as to forget to give you an account of the
“ ship in which your parcel is to come. I
“ have written to you two or three letters
“ concerning it, which I have sent by safe
“ hands, as I told you, and doubt not but
“ you have them before this can arrive to
“ you. Being out of town, I have forgotten
“ the ship’s name, which your mother will
“ enquire, and put it into her letter, which
“ is joined with mine. But the master’s
“ name I remember : he is called Mr. Ralph
“ Thorp; the ship is bound to Leghorn, con-
“ signed to Mr. Peter and Mr. Tho. Ball,
“ merchants. I am of your opinion, that by
“ Tonson’s means almost all our letters have
“ miscarried for this last year. But, however,
“ he has missed of his design in the Dedic-
“ tion, though he had prepared the book for
“ it; for in every figure of Eneas he has caused
“ him to be drawn like King William, with
“ a hooked nose. After my return to town,
“ I intend to alter a play of Sir Robert
“ Howard’s, written long since, and lately
“ put by him into my hands : ’tis called
“ *The Conquest of China by the Tartars*. It
“ will

“ will cost me six weeks study, with the
“ probable benefit of an hundred pounds.
“ In the mean time I am writing a song for
“ St. Cecilia’s Feast, who, you know, is the
“ patroness of musick. This is trouble-
“ some, and no way beneficial ; but I could
“ not deny the Stewards of the Feast, who
“ came in a body to me to desire that kind-
“ ness, one of them being Mr. Bridgman,
“ whose parents are your mother’s friends.
“ I hope to send you thirty guineas between
“ Michaelmas and Christmas, of which I
“ will give you an account when I come to
“ town. I remember the counsel you give
“ me in your letter ; but dissembling, though
“ lawful in some cases, is not my talent ;
“ yet, for your sake, I will struggle with the
“ plain openness of my nature, and keep-in
“ my just resentments against that degenerate
“ order. In the mean time, I flatter not my-
“ self with any manner of hopes, but do my
“ duty, and suffer for God’s sake ; being as-
“ sured, beforehand, never to be rewarded,
“ though the times should alter. Towards
“ the latter end of this month, September,
“ Charles will begin to recover his perfect
“ health, according to his nativity, which,
“ casting

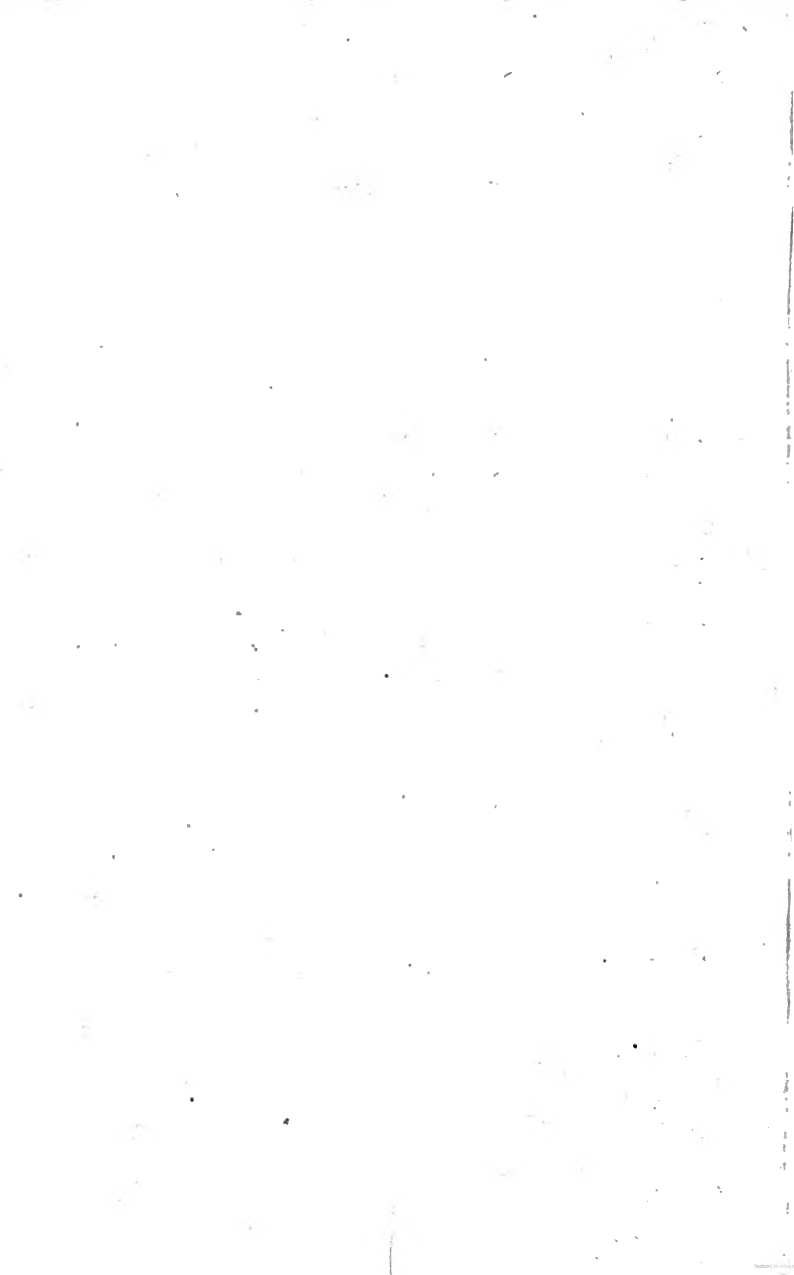
“ casting it myself, I am sure is true, and
“ all things hitherto have happened accord-
“ ingly to the very time that I predicted
“ them : I hope at the same time to recover
“ more health, according to my age. Re-
“ member me to poor Harry, whose prayers
“ I earnestly desire. My Virgil succeeds
“ in the world beyond its desert or my ex-
“ pectation. You know the profits might
“ have been more ; but neither my con-
“ science nor my honour would suffer me to
“ take them : but I never can repent of my
“ constancy, since I am thoroughly per-
“ suaded of the justice of the cause for
“ which I suffer. It has pleased God to
“ raise up many friends to me amongst my
“ enemies, though they who ought to have
“ been my friends are negligent of me. I
“ am called to dinner, and cannot go on
“ with this letter, which I desire you to ex-
“ cuse ; and am

“ Your most affectionate father,

“ JOHN DRYDEN.”

SMITH.

S M I T H.



S M I T H.

EDMUND SMITH is one of those lucky writers who have, without much labour, attained high reputation, and who are mentioned with reverence rather for the possession than the exertion of uncommon abilities.

Of his life little is known; and that little claims no praise but what can be given to intellectual excellence, seldom employed to any virtuous purpose. His character, as given by Mr. Oldisworth, with all the partiality of friendship, which is said by Dr. Burton to show *what fine things one man of*
parts

parts can say of another ; and which, however, comprises great part of what can be known of Mr. Smith, it is better to transcribe at once, than to take by pieces. I shall subjoin such little memorials as accident has enabled me to collect.

Mr. EDMUND SMITH was the only son of an eminent merchant, one Mr. Neale, by a daughter of the famous baron Lechmere. Some misfortunes of his father, which were soon after followed by his death, were the occasion of the son's being left very young in the hands of a near relation (one who married Mr. Neale's sister) whose name was Smith.

This gentleman and his lady treated him as their own child, and put him to Westminster-school under the care of Dr. Busby ; whence after the loss of his faithful and generous guardian (whose name he assumed and retained) he was removed to Christchurch in Oxford, and there by his aunt
handsomely

handsomely maintained till her death; after which he continued a member of that learned and ingenious society, till within five years of his own; though, some time before his leaving Christ-church, he was sent for by his mother to Worcester, and owned and acknowledged as her legitimate son; which had not been mentioned, but to wipe off the aspersions that were ignorantly cast by some on his birth. It is to be remembered for our author's honour, that, when at Westminster election he stood a candidate for one of the universities, he so signally distinguished himself by his conspicuous performances, that there arose no small contention between the representative electors of Trinity-college in Cambridge and Christ-church in Oxon, which of those two royal societies should adopt him as their own. But the electors of Trinity-college having the preference of choice that year, they resolutely elected him; who yet, being invited at the same time to Christ-church, chose to accept of a studentship there. Mr. Smith's perfections, as well natural as acquired, seem to have been formed upon Horace's plan; who says in his Art of Poetry,

—*Ego*

—*Ego nec studium sine divite venâ,
Nec rude quid profit video ingenium: alterius sic
Altera poscit opem res, & conjurat amice.*

He was endowed by Nature with all those excellent and necessary qualifications which are previous to the accomplishment of a great man. His memory was large and tenacious, yet, by a *curious felicity chiefly* susceptible of the finest impressions, it received from the best authors he read, which it always preserved in their primitive strength and amiable order.

He had a quickness of apprehension, and vivacity of understanding, which easily took in and surmounted the most subtle and knotty parts of mathematicks and metaphysicks. His wit was prompt and flowing, yet solid and piercing; his taste delicate, his head clear, and his way of expressing his thoughts perspicuous and engaging. I shall say nothing of his person, which yet was so well *turned*, that no neglect of himself in his dress could render it disagreeable; insomuch that the fair sex, who observed and esteemed him, at once commended and reproved him by the
name

name of the *handsome* sloven. An eager but generous and noble emulation grew up with him ; which (as it were a rational sort of instinct) pushed him upon striving to excel in every art and science that could make him a credit to his college, and that college the ornament of the most learned and polite university ; and it was his happiness to have several contemporaries and fellow-students, who exercised and excited this virtue in themselves and others, thereby becoming so deservedly in favour with this age, and so good a proof of its nice discernment. His judgement, naturally good, soon ripened into an exquisite fineness and distinguishing sagacity, which as it was active and busy, so it was vigorous and manly, keeping even paces with a rich and strong imagination, always upon the wing, and never tired with aspiring. Hence it was, that, though he writ as young as Cowley, he had no puerilities ; and his earliest productions were so far from having any thing in them mean and trifling, that, like the junior compositions of Mr. Stepney, they may make grey authors blush. There are many of his first essays in oratory, in epigram, elegy, and epique, still handed

about the university in manuscript, which shew a masterly hand; and, though maimed and injured by frequent transcribing, make their way into our most celebrated miscellanies, where they shine with uncommon lustre. Besides those verses in the Oxford books, which he could not help setting his name to, several of his compositions came abroad under other names, which his own singular modesty, and faithful silence, strove in vain to conceal. The Encœnia and publick Collections of the University upon State Subjects, were never in such esteem, either for elegy or congratulation, as when he contributed most largely to them; and it was natural for those who knew his peculiar way of writing, to turn to his share in the work, as by far the most relishing part of the entertainment. As his parts were extraordinary, so he well knew how to improve them; and not only to polish the diamond, but enchase it in the most solid and durable metal. Though he was an academick the greatest part of his life, yet he contracted no sourness of temper, no spice of pedantry, no itch of disputation, or obstinate contention for the old or new philosophy, no assuming way of dictating to others;

others ; which are faults (though excusable) which some are insensibly led into, who are constrained to dwell long within the walls of a private college. His conversation was pleasant and instructive ; and what Horace said of Plotius, Varius, and Virgil, might justly be applied to him :

Nil ego contulerim jucundo sanus Amico.

Sat. v. l. 1.

As correct a writer as he was in his most elaborate pieces, he read the works of others with candor, and reserved his greatest severity for his own compositions ; being readier to cherish and advance, than damp or depress a rising genius, and as patient of being excelled himself (if any could excel him) as industrious to excel others.

'Twere to be wished he had confined himself to a particular profession, who was capable of surpassing in any ; but in this, his want of application was in a great measure owing to his want of due encouragement.

He passed through the exercises of the college and university with unusual applause ;

and though he often suffered his friends to call him off from his retirements, and to lengthen out those jovial avocations, yet his return to his studies was so much the more passionate, and his intention upon those refined pleasures of reading and thinking so vehement (to which his facetious and unbended intervals bore no proportion) that the habit grew upon him, and the series of meditation and reflection being kept up whole weeks together, he could better sort his ideas, and take in the sundry parts of a science at one view, without interruption or confusion. Some indeed of his acquaintance, who were pleased to distinguish between the wit and the scholar, extolled him altogether on the account of the first of these titles ; but others, who knew him better, could not forbear doing him justice as a prodigy in both kinds. He had signalized himself in the schools, as a philosopher and polemick of extensive knowledge and deep penetration ; and went through all the courses with a wise regard to the dignity and importance of each science. I remember him in the Divinity-school responding and disputing with a perspicuous energy, a ready exactness, and commanding force

force of argument, when Dr. Jane worthily presided in the chair ; whose condescending and disinterested commendation of him, gave him such a reputation as silenced the envious malice of his enemies, who durst not contradict the approbation of so profound a master in theology: None of those self-sufficient creatures, who have either trifled with philosophy, by attempting to ridicule it, or have encumbered it with novel terms, and burdensome explanations, understood its real weight and purity half so well as Mr. Smith: He was too discerning to allow of the character of unprofitable, rugged, and abstruse, which some superficial sciolists (so very smooth and polite as to admit of no impression), either out of an unthinking indolence, or an ill-grounded prejudice, had affixed to this sort of studies. He knew the thorny terms of philosophy served well to fence-in the true doctrines of religion ; and looked upon school-divinity as upon a rough but well-wrought armour, which might at once adorn and defend the Christian hero, and equip him for the combat.

Mr. Smith had a long and perfect intimacy with all the Greek and Latin Classics ;

with whom he had carefully compared whatever was worth perusing in the French, Spanish, and Italian (to which languages he was no stranger), and in all the celebrated writers of his own country. But then, according to the curious observation of the late earl of Shaftesbury, he kept the poet in awe by regular criticism, and as it were, married the two arts for their mutual support and improvement. There was not a tract of credit, upon that subject, which he had not diligently examined, from Aristotle down to Hedelin and Bossû; so that, having each rule constantly before him, he could carry the art through every poem, and at once point out the graces and deformities. By this means he seemed to read with a design to correct, as well as imitate.

Being thus prepared, he could not but taste every little delicacy that was set before him; though it was impossible for him at the same time to be fed and nourished with any thing but what was substantial and lasting. He considered the ancients and moderns not as parties or rivals for fame, but as architects upon one and the same plan, the Art of Poetry; according to which he judg-

ed, approved, and blamed, without flattery or detraction. If he did not always commend the compositions of others, it was not ill-nature (which was not in his temper) but strict justice that would not let him call a few flowers set in ranks, a glib measure, and so many couplets by the name of poetry: he was of Ben Jonson's opinion, who could not admire,

—Verses as smooth and soft as cream,
In which there was neither depth nor stream.

And therefore, though his want of complaisance for some men's overbearing vanity made him enemies, yet the better part of mankind were obliged by the freedom of his reflections.

His Bodleian Speech, though taken from a remote and imperfect copy, hath shewn the world how great a master he was of the Ciceronian eloquence, mixed with the conciseness and force of Demosthenes, the elegant and moving turns of Pliny, and the acute and wise reflections of Tacitus.

Since Temple and Roscommon, no man understood Horace better, especially as to

his happy diction, rolling numbers, beautiful imagery, and alternate mixture of the soft and the sublime. This endeared Dr. Hannes's odes to him, the finest genius for Latin lyric since the Augustan age. His friend Mr. Philips's ode to Mr. St. John (late Lord Bolingbroke) after the manner of Horace's *Lusory* or *Amatorian* Odes, is certainly a masterpiece: but Mr. Smith's *Pocockius* is of the sublimer kind, though, like Waller's writings upon Oliver Cromwell, it wants not the most delicate and surprising turns peculiar to the person praised. I do not remember to have seen any thing like it in Dr. Bathurst, who had made some attempts this way with applause. He was an excellent judge of humanity; and so good an historian, that in familiar discourse he would talk over the most memorable facts in antiquity, the lives, actions, and characters of celebrated men, with amazing facility and accuracy. As he had thoroughly read and digested Thuanus's works, so he was able to copy after him; and his talent in this kind was so well known and allowed, that he had been singled out by some great men to write a history, which it was for their interest to have done with the
utmost

utmost art and dexterity. I shall not mention for what reasons this design was dropped, though they are very much to Mr. Smith's honour. The truth is, and I speak it before living witnesses, whilst an agreeable company could fix him upon a subject of useful literature, nobody shone to greater advantage: he seemed to be that Memmius whom Lucretius speaks of;

—*Quem tu, Dea, tempore in omni
Omnibus ornatum voluisti excellere rebus.*

His works are not many, and those scattered up and down in Miscellanies and Collections, being wrested from him by his friends with great difficulty and reluctance. All of them together make but a small part of that much greater body which lies dispersed in the possession of numerous acquaintance; and cannot perhaps be made entire, without great injustice to him, because few of them had his last hand, and the transcriber was often obliged to take the liberties of a friend. His condolance for the death of Mr. Philips is full of the noblest beauties, and hath done justice to the ashes of that second Milton, whose
writings

writings will last as long as the English language, generosity, and valour. For him Mr. Smith had contracted a perfect friendship; a passion he was most susceptible of, and whose laws he looked upon as sacred and inviolable.

Every subject that passed under his pen had all the life, proportion, and embellishments bestowed on it, which an exquisite skill, a warm imagination, and a cool judgement, could possibly bestow on it. The epique, lyrick, elegiac, every sort of poetry he touched upon (and he had touched upon a great variety), was raised to its proper height, and the differences between each of them observed with a judicious accuracy. We saw the old rules and new beauties placed in admirable order by each other; and there was a predominant fancy and spirit of his own infused, superior to what some draw off from the ancients, or from poetries here and there culled out of the moderns, by a painful industry and servile imitation. His contrivances were adroit and magnificent; his images lively and adequate; his sentiments charming and majestick; his expressions natural

tural and bold; his numbers various and sounding; and that enameled mixture of classical wit, which, without redundance and affectation, sparkled through his writings, and was no less pertinent than agreeable.

His *Phædra* is a consummate tragedy, and the success of it was as great as the most sanguine expectations of his friends could promise or foresee. The number of nights, and the common method of filling the house, are not always the surest marks of judging what encouragement a play meets with: but the generosity of all the persons of a refined taste about town was remarkable on this occasion; and it must not be forgotten how zealously Mr. Addison espoused his interest, with all the elegant judgement and diffusive good-nature for which that accomplished gentleman and author is so justly valued by mankind. But as to *Phædra*, she has certainly made a finer figure under Mr. Smith's conduct, upon the English stage, than either Rome or Athens; and if she excels the Greek and Latin *Phædra*, I need not say she surpasses the French one, though embellished with whatever regular beauties
and

and moving softness Racine himself could give her.

No man had a juster notion of the difficulty of composing than Mr. Smith, and he sometimes would create greater difficulties than he had reason to apprehend. Writing with ease, what (as Mr. Wycherley speaks) may be easily written, moved his indignation. When he was writing upon a subject, he would seriously consider what Demosthenes, Homer, Virgil, or Horace, if alive, would say upon that occasion, which whetted him to exceed himself as well as others. Nevertheless, he could not, or would not, finish several subjects he undertook; which may be imputed either to the briskness of his fancy, still hunting after new matter, or to an occasional indolence, which spleen and lassitude brought upon him, which, of all his foibles, the world was least inclined to forgive. That this was not owing to conceit and vanity, or a fulness of himself (a frailty which has been imputed to no less men than Shakspeare and Jonson), is clear from hence; because he left his works to the entire disposal of his friends, whose most
rigorous

rigorous censures he even courted and solicited ; submitting to their animadversions, and the freedom they took with them, with an unreserved and prudent resignation.

I have seen sketches and rough draughts of some poems he designed, set out analytically ; wherein the fable, structure, and connexion, the images, incidents, moral, episodes, and a great variety of ornaments, were so finely laid out, so well fitted to the rules of art, and squared so exactly to the precedents of the ancients, that I have often looked on these poetical elements with the same concern, with which curious men are affected at the sight of the most entertaining remains and ruins of an antique figure or building. Those fragments of the learned, which some men have been so proud of their pains in collecting, are useless rarities, without form and without life, when compared with these embryo's, which wanted not spirit enough to preserve them ; so that I cannot help thinking, that, if some of them were to come abroad, they would be as highly valued by the poets, as the sketches of Julio
and

and Titian are by the painters; though there is nothing in them but a few out-lines, as to the design and proportion.

It must be confessed, that Mr. Smith had some defects in his conduct, which those are most apt to remember who could imitate him in nothing else. His freedom with himself drew severer acknowledgements from him than all the malice he ever provoked was capable of advancing, and he did not scruple to give even his misfortunes the hard name of faults; but if the world had half his good-nature, all the shady parts would be entirely struck out of his character.

A man, who, under poverty, calamities, and disappointments, could make so many friends, and those so truly valuable, must have just and noble ideas of the passion of friendship, in the success of which consisted the greatest, if not the only, happiness of his life. He knew very well what was due to his birth, though Fortune threw him short of it in every other circumstance of life.

life. He avoided making any, though perhaps reasonable, complaints of her dispensations, under which he had honour enough to be easy, without touching the favours she flung in his way when offered to him at the price of a more durable reputation. He took care to have no dealings with mankind, in which he could not be just; and he desired to be at no other expence in his pretensions than that of intrinsic merit, which was the only burthen and reproach he ever brought upon his friends. He could say, as Horace did of himself, what I never yet saw translated;

—*Meo sum pauper in ære.*

At his coming to town, no man was more surrounded by all those who really had or pretended to wit, or more courted by the great men, who had then a power and opportunity of encouraging arts and sciences, and gave proofs of their fondness for the name of Patron in many instances, which will ever be remembered to their glory. Mr. Smith's character grew upon his friends by intimacy, and outwent the strongest prepossessions, which had been conceived in his favour.

vour. Whatever quarrel a few four creatures, whose obscurity is their happiness, may possibly have to the age; yet amidst a studied neglect, and total disuse of all those ceremonial attendances, fashionable equipments, and external recommendations, which are thought necessary introductions into the *grande monde*, this gentleman was so happy as still to please; and whilst the rich, the gay, the noble, and honourable, saw how much he excelled in wit and learning, they easily forgave him all other differences. Hence it was that both his acquaintance and retirements were his own free choice. What Mr. Prior observes upon a very great character, was true of him; *that most of his faults brought their excuse with them.*

Those who blamed him most, understood him least: it being the custom of the vulgar to charge an excess upon the most complaisant, and to form a character by the morals of a few, who have sometimes spoiled an hour or two in good company. Where only fortune is wanting to make a great name, that single exception can never pass upon the best judges and most equitable observers of mankind;

kind; and when the time comes for the world to spare their pity, we may justly enlarge our demands upon them for their admiration.

Some few years before his death, he had engaged himself in several considerable undertakings; in all which he had prepared the world to expect mighty things from him. I have seen about ten sheets of his *English Pindar*, which exceeded any thing of that kind I could ever hope for in our own language. He had drawn out the plan of a tragedy of the *Lady Jane Grey*, and had gone through several scenes of it. But he could not well have bequeathed that work to better hands than where, I hear, it is at present lodged; and the bare mention of two such names may justify the largest expectations, and is sufficient to make the town an agreeable invitation.

His greatest and noblest undertaking was *Longinus*. He had finished an entire translation of the *Sublime*, which he sent to the reverend Mr. Richard Parker, a friend of his, late of Merton College, an exact critick

in the Greek tongue, from whom it came to my hands. The French version of Monsieur Boileau, though truly valuable, was far short of it. He proposed a large addition to this work, of notes and observations of his own, with an entire system of the Art of Poetry, in three books, under the titles of *Thought*, *Diction*, and *Figure*. I saw the last of these perfect, and in a fair copy, in which he shewed prodigious judgement and reading; and particularly had reformed the Art of Rhetorick, by reducing that vast and confused heap of terms, with which a long succession of pedants had encumbered the world, to a very narrow compass, comprehending all that was useful and ornamental in poetry. Under each head and chapter, he intended to make remarks upon all the ancients and moderns, the Greek, Latin, English, French, Spanish, and Italian poets, and to note their several beauties and defects.

What remains of his works is left, as I am informed, in the hands of men of worth and judgement, who loved him. It cannot be supposed they would suppress any thing that was his, but out of respect to his memory, and

and for want of proper hands to finish what
so great a genius had begun.

SUCH is the declamation of Oldisworth, written while his admiration was yet fresh, and his kindness warm; and therefore such as, without any criminal purpose of deceiving, shews a strong desire to make the most of all favourable truth. I cannot much commend the performance. The praise is often indistinct, and the sentences are loaded with words of more pomp than use. There is little however that can be contradicted, even when a plainer tale comes to be told.

EDMUND NEAL, known by the name of Smith, was born at Handley, the seat of the Lechmeres, in Worcestershire. The year of his birth is uncertain.

He was educated at Westminster. It is known to have been the practice of Dr. Busby to detain those youths long at school, of whom he had formed the highest expectations. Smith took his Master's degree on the 8th of July 1696: he therefore was probably admitted into the university in 1689, when we may suppose him twenty years old.

His reputation for literature in his college was such as has been told; but the indecency and licentiousness of his behaviour drew upon him, Dec. 24, 1694, while he was yet only Batchelor, a publick admonition, entered upon record, in order to his expulsion. Of this reproof the effect is not known. He was probably less notorious. At Oxford, as we all know, much will be forgiven to literary merit; and of that he had given sufficient evidence by his excellent ode on the death of
the

the great Orientalist, Dr. Pocock, who died in 1691, and whose praise must have been written by Smith when he had been yet but two years in the university.

This ode, which closed the second volume of the *Musæ Anglicanæ*, though perhaps some objections may be made to its Latinity, is by far the best Lyrick composition in that collection; nor do I know where to find it equalled among the modern writers. It expresses, with great felicity, images not classical in classical diction: its digressions and returns have been deservedly recommended by Trapp as models for imitation.

He has several imitations of Cowley:

Vestitur hinc tot sermo coloribus
 Quot tu, Pococki, dissimilis tui
 Orator effers, quot vicissim
 Te memores celebrare gaudent.

I will not commend the figure which makes the orator *pronounce colours*, or give to *colours memory and delight*. I quote it, however, as an imitation of these lines;

So many languages he had in store,
That only Fame shall speak of him in more.

The simile, by which an old man, retaining the fire of his youth, is compared to *Ætna* flaming through the snow, which Smith has used with great pomp, is stolen from Cowley, however little worth the labour of conveyance.

He proceeded to take his degree of Master of Arts July 8, 1696. Of the exercises which he performed on that occasion, I have not heard of any thing memorable.

As his years advanced, he advanced in reputation ; for he continued to cultivate his mind ; but he did not amend his irregularities, by which he gave so much offence, that, April 24, 1700, the Dean and Chapter declared “ the place of Mr. Smith
“ void, he having been convicted of riotous
“ misbehaviour in the house of Mr. Cole an
“ apothecary ; but it was referred to the Dean
“ when and upon what occasion the sentence
“ should be put in execution.”

Thus

Thus tenderly was he treated: the governors of his college could hardly keep him, and yet wished that he would not force them to drive him away.

Some time afterwards he assumed an appearance of decency; in his own phrase, he *whitened* himself, having a desire to obtain the censorship, an office of honour and some profit in the college; but when the election came, the preference was given to Mr. *Foulkes*, his junior; the same, I suppose, that joined with *Freind* in an edition of part of Demosthenes; it not being thought proper to trust the superintendence of others to a man who took so little care of himself.

From this time Smith employed his malice and his wit against the Dean, Dr. Aldrich, whom he considered as the opponent of his claim. Of his lampoon upon him, I once heard a single line too gross to be repeated.

But he was still a genius and a scholar, and Oxford was unwilling to lose him: he was endured, with all his pranks and his vices,

two years longer ; but on Dec. 20, 1705, at the instance of all the canons, the sentence declared five years before was put in execution.

The execution was, I believe, silent and tender ; for one of his friends, from whom I learned much of his life, appeared not to know it.

He was now driven to London, where he associated himself with the Whigs, whether because they were in power, or because the Tories had expelled him, or because he was a Whig by principle, may perhaps be doubted. He was however caressed by men of great abilities, whatever were their party, and was supported by the liberality of those who delighted in his conversation.

There was once a design hinted at by Oldisworth, to have made him useful. One evening, as he was sitting with a friend at a tavern, he was called down by the waiter ; and, having staid some time below, came up thoughtful. After a pause, said he to his friend, “ He that wanted me below was Addison, whose business was to tell me that
“ a His-

“ a History of the Revolution was intended,
“ and to propose that I should undertake it.
“ I said, what shall I do with the character of
“ lord Sunderland? and Addison immedi-
“ ately returned, When, Rag, were you
“ drunk last? and went away.”

Captain *Rag* was a name which he got at Oxford by his negligence of dress.

This story I heard from the late Mr. Clark of Lincoln's Inn, to whom it was told by the friend of Smith.

Such scruples might debar him from some profitable employments; but as they could not deprive him of any real esteem, they left him many friends; and no man was ever better introduced to the theatre than he, who, in that violent conflict of parties, had a Prologue and Epilogue from the first wits on either side.

But learning and nature will now and then take different courses. His play pleased the criticks, and the criticks only. It was, as Addison has recorded, hardly heard the third night. Smith had indeed trusted entirely to
his

his merit ; had ensured no band of applauders, nor used any artifice to force success, and found that naked excellence was not sufficient for its own support.

The play, however, was bought by Lintot, who advanced the price from fifty guineas, the current rate, to sixty ; and Halifax, the general patron, accepted the dedication. Smith's indolence kept him from writing the dedication, till Lintot, after fruitless importunity, gave notice that he would publish the play without it. Now therefore it was written ; and Halifax expected the author with his book, and had prepared to reward him with a place of three hundred pounds a year. Smith, by pride, or caprice, or indolence, or bashfulness, neglected to attend him, though doubtless warned and pressed by his friends, and at last missed his reward by not going to solicit it.

Addison has, in the *Spectator*, mentioned the neglect of Smith's tragedy as disgraceful to the nation, and imputes it to the fondness for operas then prevailing. The authority of Addison is great ; yet the voice of the people, when to please the people is the purpose,

pose, deserves regard. In this question, I cannot but think the people in the right. The fable is mythological, a story which we are accustomed to reject as false, and the manners are so distant from our own, that we know them not from sympathy, but by study: the ignorant do not understand the action, the learned reject it as a school-boy's tale; *incredulus odi*. What I cannot for a moment believe, I cannot for a moment behold with interest or anxiety. The sentiments thus remote from life, are removed yet further by the diction, which is too luxuriant and splendid for dialogue, and envelopes the thoughts rather than displays them. It is a scholar's play, such as may please the reader rather than the spectator; the work of a vigorous and elegant mind, accustomed to please itself with its own conceptions, but of little acquaintance with the course of life.

Dennis tells, in one of his pieces, that he had once a design to have written the tragedy of *Phædra*; but was convinced that the action was too mythological.

In 1709; a year after the exhibition of *Phædra*, died John Philips, the friend and

fellow-collegian of Smith, who, on that occasion, wrote a poem, which justice must place among the best elegies which our language can shew, an elegant mixture of fondness and admiration, of dignity and softness. There are some passages too ludicrous; but every human performance has its faults.

This elegy it was the mode among his friends to purchase for a guinea; and, as his acquaintance was numerous, it was a very profitable poem.

Of his *Pindar*, mentioned by Oldisworth, I have never otherwise heard. His *Longinus* he intended to accompany with some illustrations, and had selected his instances of the false *Sublime* from the works of Blackmore.

He resolved to try again the fortune of the Stage, with the story of Lady Jane Grey. It is not unlikely that his experience of the inefficacy and incredibility of a mythological tale, might determine him to choose an action from English History, at no great distance from our own times, which was to
end

end in a real event, produced by the operation of known characters.

A subject will not easily occur that can give more opportunities of informing the understanding, for which Smith was unquestionably qualified, or for moving the passions, in which I suspect him to have had less power.

Having formed his plan, and collected materials, he declared that a few months would complete his design; and, that he might pursue his work with fewer avocations, he was, in June 1710, invited by Mr. George Duckett to his house at Gartham in Wiltshire. Here he found such opportunities of indulgence as did not much forward his studies, and particularly some strong ale, too delicious to be resisted. He eat and drank till he found himself plethorick: and then, resolving to ease himself by evacuation, he wrote to an apothecary in the neighbourhood a prescription of a purge so forcible, that the apothecary thought it his duty to delay it till he had given notice of its danger. Smith, not pleased with the contradiction

dition of a shopman, and boastful of his own knowledge, treated the notice with rude contempt, and swallowed his own medicine, which, in July 1710, brought him to the grave. He was buried at Gartham.

Many years afterwards, Duckett communicated to Oldmixon the historian, an account, pretended to have been received from Smith, that Clarendon's History was, in its publication, corrupted by Aldrich, Smalridge, and Atterbury; and that Smith was employed to forge and insert the alterations.

This story was published triumphantly by Oldmixon, and may be supposed to have been eagerly received: but its progress was soon checked; for finding its way into the Journal of Trevoux, it fell under the eye of Atterbury, then an exile in France, who immediately denied the charge, with this remarkable particular, that he never in his whole life had once spoken to Smith; his company being, as must be inferred, not accepted by those who attended to their characters.

The charge was afterwards very diligently refuted by Dr. Burton of Eaton; a man eminent

ment for literature, and, though not of the same party with Aldrich and Atterbury, too studious of truth to leave them burthened with a false charge. The testimonies which he has collected, have convinced mankind that either Smith or Ducket were guilty of wilful and malicious falsehood.

This controversy brought into view those parts of Smith's life, which with more honour to his name might have been concealed.

Of Smith I can yet say a little more. He was a man of such estimation among his companions, that the casual censures or praises which he dropped in conversation were considered, like those of Scaliger, as worthy of preservation.

He had great readiness and exactness of criticism, and by a cursory glance over a new composition would exactly tell all its faults and beauties.

He was remarkable for the power of reading with great rapidity, and of retaining with great fidelity what he so easily collected.

He

He therefore always knew what the present question required ; and when his friends expressed their wonder at his acquisitions, made in a state of apparent negligence and drunkenness, he never discovered his hours of reading or method of study, but involved himself in affected silence, and fed his own vanity with their admiration and conjectures.

One practice he had, which was easily observed : if any thought or image was presented to his mind, that he could use or improve, he did not suffer it to be lost ; but, amidst the jollity of a tavern, or in the warmth of conversation, very diligently committed it to paper.

Thus it was that he had gathered two quires of hints for his new tragedy ; of which Rowe, when they were put into his hands, could make, as he says, very little use, but which the collector considered as a valuable stock of materials.

When he came to London, his way of life connected him with the licentious and
3 dissolute ;

diffolute ; and he affected the airs and gaiety of a man of pleasure ; but his dress was always deficient : scholastick cloudiness still hung about him ; and his merriment was sure to produce the scorn of his companions.

With all his carelessness, and all his vices, he was one of the murmurers at Fortune ; and wondered why he was suffered to be poor, when Addison was caressed and preferred : nor would a very little have contented him ; for he estimated his wants at six hundred pounds a year.

In his course of reading it was particular, that he had diligently perused, and accurately remembered, the old romances of knight errantry.

He had a high opinion of his own merit, and something contemptuous in his treatment of those whom he considered as not qualified to oppose or contradict him. He had many frailties ; yet it cannot but be supposed that he had great merit, who could obtain to the same play a prologue from Addison, and an epilogue from Prior ; and who

could have at once the patronage of Halifax, and the praise of Oldifworth.

For the power of communicating these minute memorials, I am indebted to my conversation with Gilbert Walmesley, late register of the ecclesiastical court of Litchfield, who was acquainted both with Smith and Ducket; and declared, that, if the tale concerning Clarendon were forged, he should suspect Ducket of the falsehood; *for Rag was a man of great veracity.*

Worth frequent reading
Of Gilbert Walmesley, thus presented to my mind, let me indulge myself in the remembrance. I knew him very early; he was one of the first friends that literature procured me, and I hope that at least my gratitude made me worthy of his notice.

He was of an advanced age, and I was only not a boy; yet he never received my notions with contempt. He was a Whig, with all the virulence and malevolence of his party; yet difference of opinion did not keep us apart. I honoured him, and he endured me.

He had mingled with the gay world, without exemption from its vices or its follies, but had never neglected the cultivation of his mind; his belief of Revelation was unshaken; his learning preserved his principles; he grew first regular, and then pious.

His studies had been so various, that I am not able to name a man of equal knowledge. His acquaintance with books was great; and what he did not immediately know, he could at least tell where to find. Such was his amplitude of learning, and such his copiousness of communication, that it may be doubted whether a day now passes in which I have not some advantage from his friendship.

At this man's table I enjoyed many cheerful and instructive hours, with companions such as are not often found; with one who has lengthened, and one who has gladdened life; with Dr. James, whose skill in physick will be long remembered; and with David Garrick, whom I hoped to have gratified with this character of our common friend: but what are the hopes of man! I am disappointed by that stroke of death,

which has eclipsed the gaiety of nations, and impoverished the publick stock of harmless pleasure.

In the Library at Oxford is the following
 Ludicrous Analysis of *Pocockius* :

EX AUTOGRAPHO.

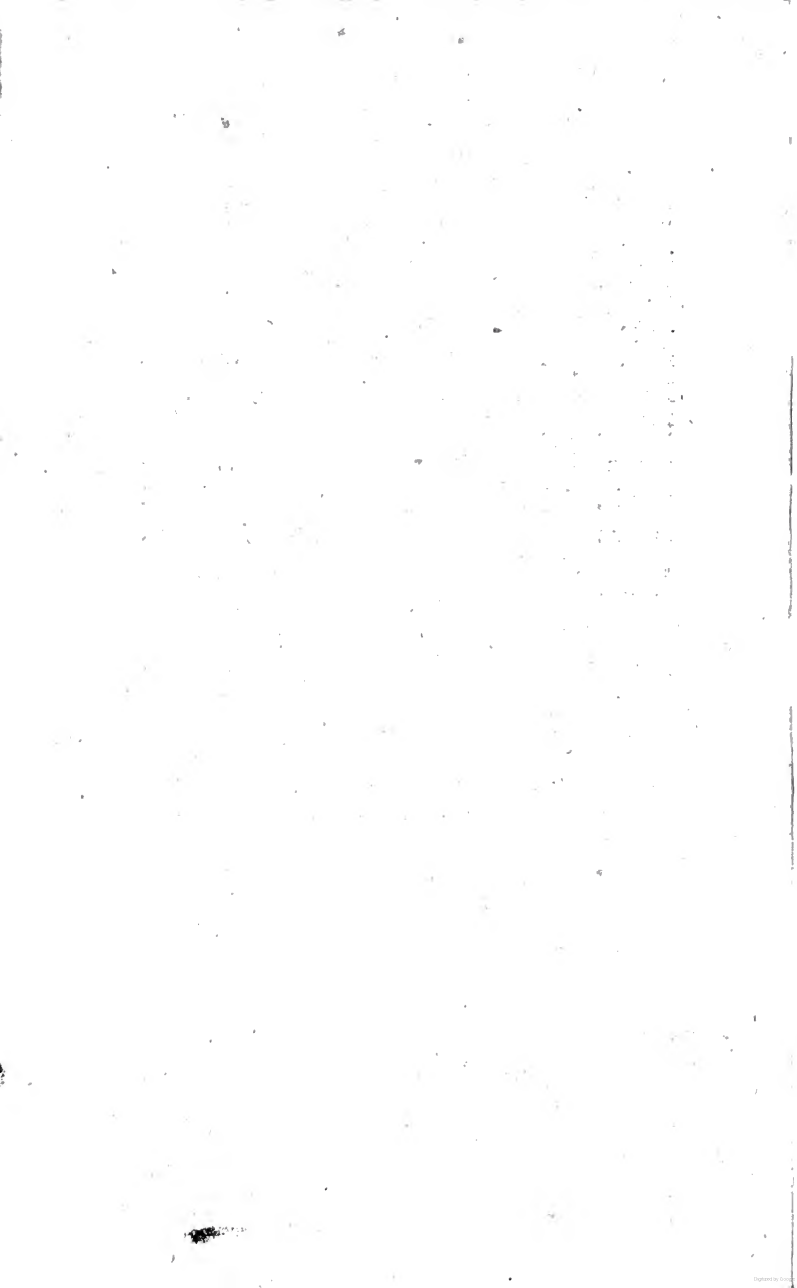
[Sent by the Author to Mr. Urry.]

OPUSCULUM hoc, Halberdarie amplissime, in lucem proferre hactenus distuli, iudicii tui acumen subveritus magis quam bipennis. Tandem aliquando Oden hanc ad te mitto sublimem, teneram, flebilem, suavem, qualem demum divinus (si musis vacaret) scripsisset Gastrellus. Adeo scilicet sublimem ut inter legendum dormire, adeo flebilem ut ridere velis. Cujus elegantiam ut melius inspicias, versum, ordinem & materiam breviter referam. 1^{mus} versus de duobus præliis decantatis. 2^{dus} & 3^{us} de Lotharingio, cuniculis subterraneis, saxis, ponto, hostibus, & Asia. 4^{tus} & 5^{us} de catenis, sudibus uncis, draconibus, tigribus & crocodilis.

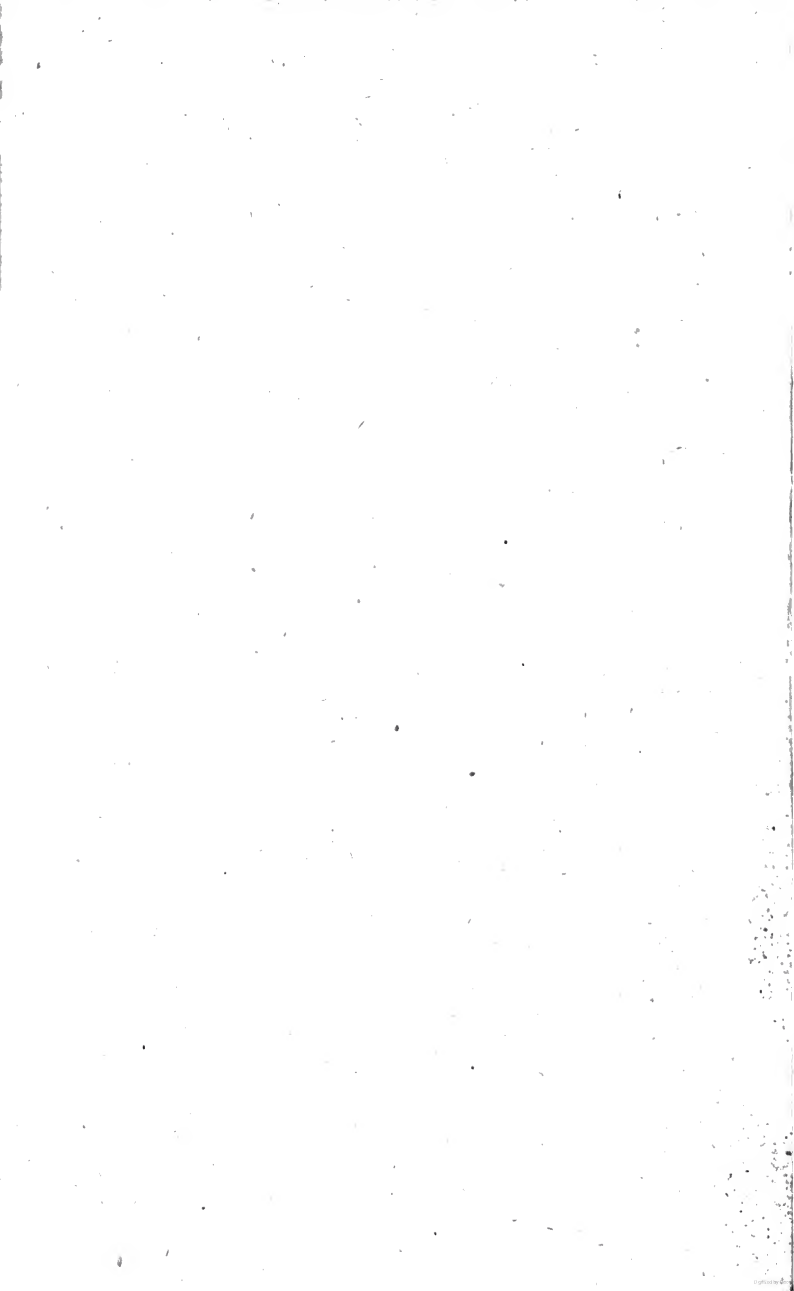
codilis. 6^{us}, 7^{us}, 8^{us}, 9^{us}, de Gomorrha, de Babylone, Babele, & quodam domi suæ peregrino. 10^{us}, aliquid de quodam Pocockio. 11^{us}, 12^{us}, de Syriâ, Solymâ. 13^{us}, 14^{us}, de Hofeâ, & quercu, & de juvene quodam valde fene. 15^{us}, 16^{us}, de Ætnâ & quomodo Ætna Pocockio sit valde similis. 17^{us}, 18^{us}, de tubâ, astro, umbrâ, flammis, rotis, Pocockio non neglecto. Cætera de Christianis, Ottomanis, Babyloniis, Arabibus, & gravissimâ agrorum melancholiâ; de Cæsare, Flacco, Nestore, & miserando juvenis cujusdam florentissimi fato, anno ætatis suæ centesimo præmaturè abrepti. Quæ omnia cum accuratè expenderis, necesse est ut Oden hanc meam admirandâ planè varietati constare fatearis. Subito ad Batavos proficiscor lauro ab illis donandus. Prius vero Pembrochienses, voco ad certamen Poeticum. Vale.

Illustrissima tua deosculor crura.

E. SMITH.



D U K E.



D U K E.

OF Mr. RICHARD DUKE I can find few memorials. He was bred at Westminster and Cambridge; and Jacob relates, that he was some time tutor to the duke of Richmond.

He appears from his writings to have been not ill qualified for poetical compositions; and being conscious of his powers, when he left the university he enlisted himself among the wits. He was the familiar friend of Otway; and was engaged, among other popular names, in the translations of Ovid and Juvenal. In his *Review*, though unfinished,

finished, are some vigorous lines. His poems are not below mediocrity ; nor have I found much in them to be praised.

With the Wit he seems to have shared the dissoluteness of the times ; for some of his compositions are such as he must have reviewed with detestation in his later days, when he published those Sermons which *Felton* has commended.

Perhaps, like some other foolish young men, he rather talked than lived viciously, in an age when he that would be thought a Wit was afraid to say his prayers ; and whatever might have been the first part of his life, it was surely condemned and reformed by his better judgement.

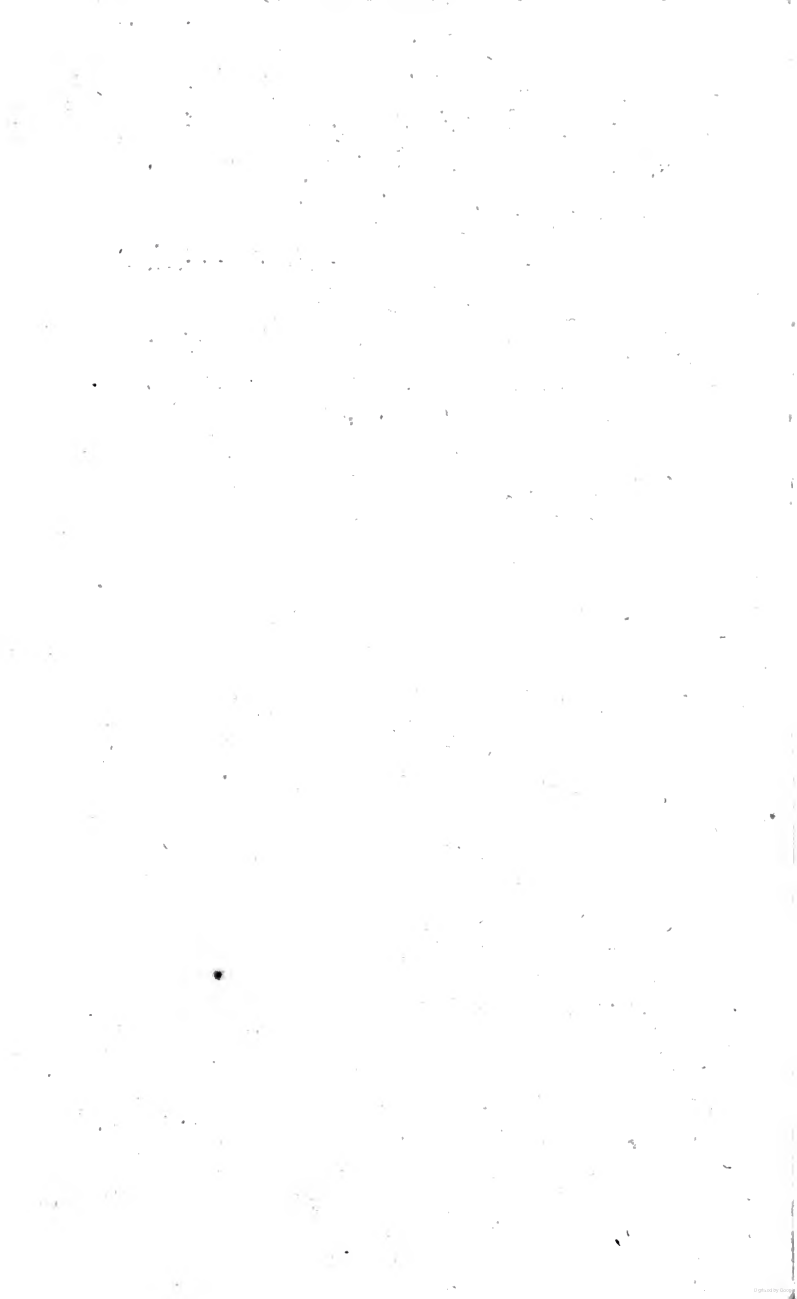
In 1683, being then master of arts, and fellow of Trinity College in Cambridge, he wrote a poem on the marriage of the Lady Anne with George Prince of Denmark.

He took orders ; and being made prebendary of Gloucester, became a proctor in convocation

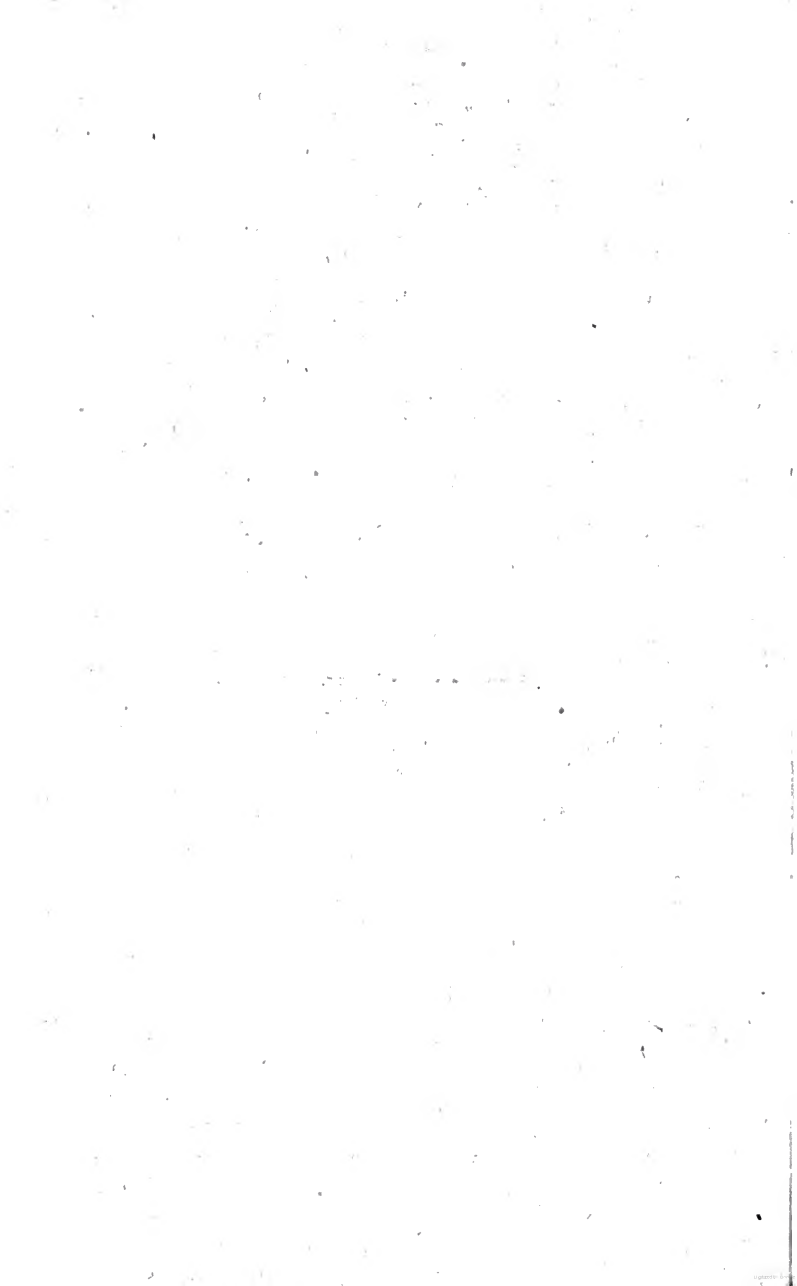
convocation for that church, and chaplain to Queen Anne.

In 1710, he was presented by the bishop of Winchester to the wealthy living of Witney in Oxfordshire, which he enjoyed but a few months. On February 10, 1710-11, having returned from an entertainment, he was found dead the next morning. His death is mentioned in Swift's Journal.

KING.



K I N G.



K I N G.

WILLIAM KING was born in London in 1663; the son of Ezekiel King, a gentleman. He was allied to the family of Clarendon.

From Westminster-school, where he was a scholar on the foundation under the care of Dr. Busby, he was at eighteen elected to Christ-church, in 1681; where he is said to have prosecuted his studies with so much intenseness and activity, that, before he was eight years standing, he had read over, and made remarks upon, twenty-two thousand odd hundred books and manuscripts. The
books

books were certainly not very long, the manuscripts not very difficult, nor the remarks very large ; for the calculator will find that he dispatched seven a-day, for every day of his eight years, with a remnant that more than satisfies most other students. He took his degree in the most expensive manner, as a *grand compounder* ; whence it is inferred that he inherited a considerable fortune.

In 1688, the same year in which he was made master of arts, he published a confutation of Varillas's account of Wicliffe ; and, engaging in the study of the Civil Law, became doctor in 1692, and was admitted advocate at Doctors Commons.

He had already made some translations from the French, and written some humorous and satirical pieces ; when, in 1694, Molesworth published his *Account of Denmark*, in which he treats the Danes and their monarch with great contempt ; and takes the opportunity of insinuating those wild principles, by which he supposes liberty to be established, and his adversaries suspect
that

that all subordination and government is endangered:

This book offended prince George ; and the Danish minister presented a memorial against it. The principles of its author did not please Dr. King, and therefore he undertook to confute part, and laugh at the rest. The controversy is now forgotten ; and books of this kind seldom live long, when interest and resentment have ceased.

In 1697 he mingled in the controversy between Boyle and Bentley ; and was one of those who tried what Wit could perform in opposition to Learning.

In 1699 was published by him *A Journey to London*, after the method of Dr. Martin Lister. And in 1700 he satirised the Royal Society, at least Sir *Hans Sloane* their president, in two dialogues, intituled *The Trans-actioneer*.

Though he was a regular advocate in the courts of civil and canon law, he did not love his profession, nor indeed any kind of

business which interrupted his voluptuary dreams, or forced him to rouse from that indulgence in which only he could find delight. His reputation as a civilian was yet maintained by his judgements in the courts of Delegates, and raised very high by the address and knowledge which he discovered in 1700, when he defended the earl of Anglesea against his lady, afterwards dutchess of Buckinghamshire, who sued for a divorce, and obtained it.

The expence of his pleasures, and neglect of business, had now lessened his revenues; and he was willing to accept of a settlement in Ireland, where, about 1702, he was made judge of the admiralty, commissioner of the prizes, keeper of the records in Birmingham's tower, and vicar-general to Dr. Marsh the primate.

But it is vain to put wealth within the reach of him who will not stretch out his hand to take it. King soon found a friend as idle and thoughtless as himself, in *Upton*, one of the judges, who had a pleasant house called Mountown, near Dublin, to which
King

King frequently retired ; delighting to neglect his interest, forget his cares, and desert his duty.

Here he wrote *Mully of Mountown*, a poem ; by which, though fanciful readers in the pride of sagacity have given it a political interpretation, was meant originally no more than it expressed, as it was dictated only by the author's delight in the quiet of *Mountown*.

In 1708, when lord Wharton was sent to govern Ireland, King returned to London, with his poverty, his idleness, and his wit ; and published some essays called *Useful Transactions*. His *Voyage to the Island of Cajamai* is particularly commended. He then wrote the *Art of Love*, a poem remarkable, notwithstanding its title, for purity of sentiment ; and in 1709 imitated Horace in an *Art of Cookery*, which he published, with some letters to Dr. Lister.

In 1710 he appeared, as a lover of the Church, on the side of Sacheverell ; and was supposed to have concurred at least in the pro-

jection of *The Examiner*. His eyes were open to all the operations of Whiggism; and he bestowed some strictures upon Dr. Kennet's adulatory sermon at the funeral of the duke of Devonshire.

The History of the Heathen Gods, a book composed for schools, was written by him in 1711. The work is useful; but might have been produced without the powers of King. The same year he published *Rufinus*, an historical essay, and a poem, intended to dispose the nation to think as he thought of the duke of Marlborough and his adherents.

In 1711, competence, if not plenty, was again put into his power. He was, without the trouble of attendance, or the mortification of a request, made gazetteer. Swift, Freind, Prior, and other men of the same party, brought him the key of the gazetteer's office. He was now again placed in a profitable employment, and again threw the benefit away. An Act of Insolvency made his business at that time particularly troublesome; and he would not wait till hurry should

should be at an end, but impatiently resigned it, and returned to his wonted indigence and amusements.

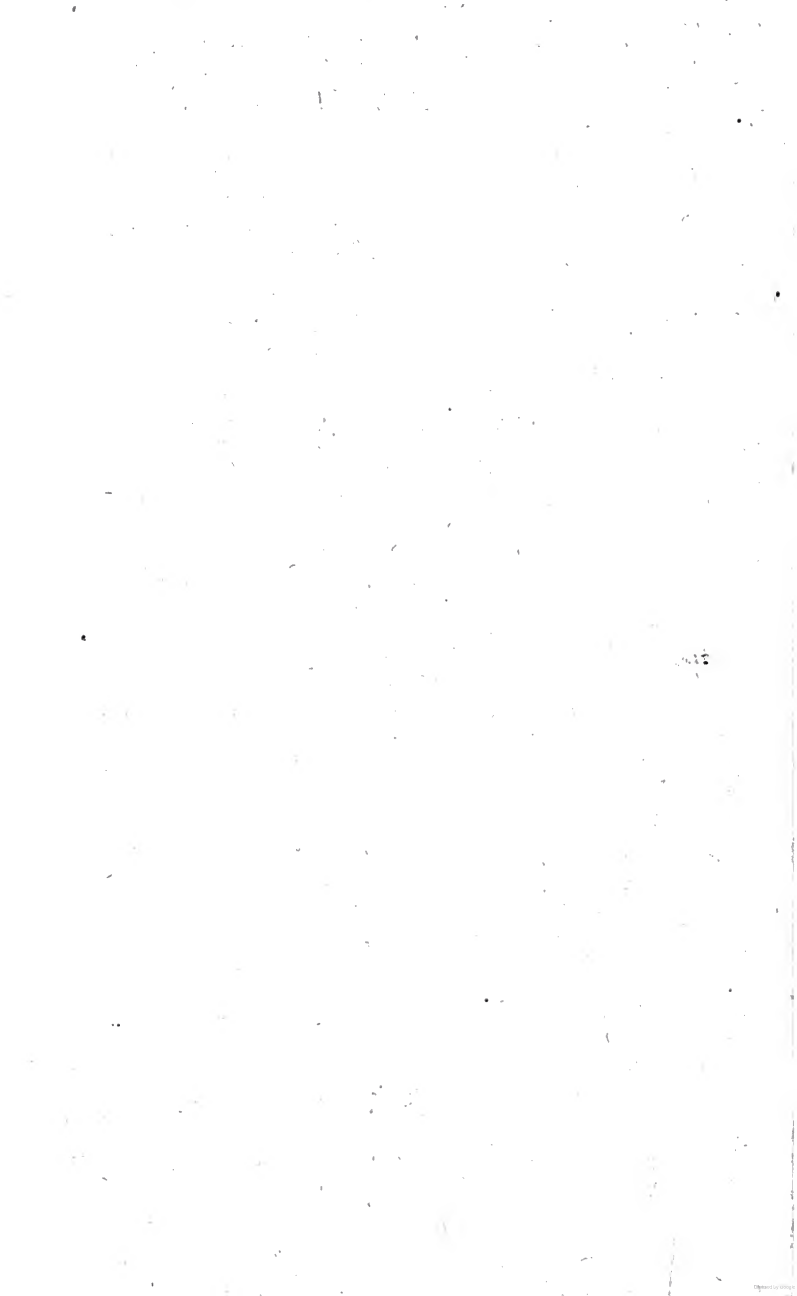
One of his amusements at Lambeth, where he resided, was to mortify Dr. Tennison, the archbishop, by a publick festivity, on the surrender of Dunkirk to Hill; an event with which Tennison's political bigotry did not suffer him to be delighted. King was resolved to counteract his sullenness, and at the expence of a few barrels of ale filled the neighbourhood with honest merriment.

In the Autumn of 1712 his health declined; he grew weaker by degrees, and died on Christmas-day. Though his life had not been without irregularity, his principles were pure and orthodox, and his death was pious.

After this relation, it will be naturally supposed that his poems were rather the amusements of idleness than efforts of study; that he endeavoured rather to divert than astonish; that his thoughts seldom aspired to

sublimity ; and that, if his verse was easy and his images familiar, he attained what he desired. His purpose is to be merry ; though perhaps, to enjoy his mirth, it may be sometimes necessary to think well of his opinions.

S P R A T.



S P R A T.

THOMAS SPRAT was born in 1636, at Tallaton in Devonshire, the son of a clergyman; and having been educated, as he tells of himself, not at Westminster or Eaton, but at a little school by the churchyard side, became a commoner of Wadham College in Oxford in 1651; and, being chosen scholar next year, proceeded through the usual academical course, and in 1657 became master of arts. He obtained a fellowship, and commenced poet.

In 1659, his poem on the death of Oliver was published, with those of Dryden and Waller.

Waller. In his dedication to Dr. Wilkins he appears a very willing and liberal encomiast, both of the living and the dead. He implōres his patron's excuse of his verses, both as falling *so infinitely below the full and sublime genius of that excellent poet who made this way of writing free of our nation, and being so little equal and proportioned to the renown of the prince on whom they were written; such great actions and lives deserving to be the subject of the noblest pens and most divine phantasies.* He proceeds: *Having so long experienced your care and indulgence, and been formed, as it were, by your own hands, not to entitle you to any thing which my meanness produces, would be not only injustice, but sacrilege.*

He published the same year a poem on the *Plague of Athens*; a subject of which it is not easy to say what could recommend it. To these he added afterwards a poem on Mr. Cowley's death.

After the Restoration he took orders, and by Cowley's recommendation was made chaplain to the duke of Buckingham, whom he

is said to have helped in writing the *Rebear-sal*. He was likewise chaplain to the king.

As he was the favourite of Wilkins, at whose house began those philosophical conferences and enquiries, which in time produced the Royal Society, he was consequently engaged in the same studies, and became one of the fellows; and when, after their incorporation, something seemed necessary to reconcile the publick to the new institution, he undertook to write its history, which he published in 1667. This is one of the few books which selection of sentiment and elegance of diction have been able to preserve, though written upon a subject flux and transitory. The History of the Royal Society is now read, not with the wish to know what they were then doing, but how their transactions are exhibited by Sprat.

In the next year he published *Observations on Sorbiere's Voyage into England, in a Letter to Mr. Wren*. This is a work not ill performed; but perhaps rewarded with at least its full proportion of praise.

In

In 1668 he published Cowley's Latin poems, and prefixed in Latin the Life of the Author ; which he afterwards amplified, and placed before Cowley's English works, which were by will committed to his care.

Ecclesiastical benefices now fell fast upon him. In 1668 he became a prebendary of Westminster, and had afterwards the church of St. Margaret, adjoining to the Abbey. He was in 1680 made canon of Windsor, in 1683 dean of Westminster, and in 1684 bishop of Rochester.

The Court having thus a claim to his diligence and gratitude, he was required to write the History of the Rye-house Plot ; and in 1685 published *A true Account and Declaration of the horrid Conspiracy against the late King, his present Majesty, and the present Government* ; a performance which he thought convenient, after the Revolution, to extenuate and excuse.

The same year, being clerk of the closet to the king, he was made dean of the chapel-royal ;

royal ; and the year afterwards received the last proof of his master's confidence, by being appointed one of the commissioners for ecclesiastical affairs. On the critical day, when the *Declaration* distinguished the true sons of the church of England, he stood neuter, and permitted it to be read at Westminster ; but pressed none to violate his conscience ; and when the bishop of London was brought before them, gave his voice in his favour.

Thus far he suffered interest or obedience to carry him ; but further he refused to go. When he found that the powers of the ecclesiastical commission were to be exercised against those who had refused the Declaration, he wrote to the lords, and other commissioners, a formal profession of his unwillingness to exercise that authority any longer, and withdrew himself from them. After they had read his letter, they adjourned for six months, and scarcely ever met afterwards.

When king James was frightened away, and a new government was to be settled, Sprat was one of those who considered, in a conference,

ference, the great question, whether the crown was vacant ; and manfully spoke in favour of his old master.

He complied, however, with the new establishment, and was left unmolested ; but in 1692 a strange attack was made upon him by one *Robert Young* and *Stephen Blackhead*, both men convicted of infamous crimes, and both, when the scheme was laid, prisoners in Newgate. These men drew up an association, in which they whose names were subscribed declared their resolution to restore king James ; to seize the princess of Orange, dead or alive ; and to be ready with thirty thousand men to meet king James when he should land. To this they put the names of Sancroft, Sprat, Marlborough, Salisbury, and others. The copy of Dr. Sprat's name was obtained by a fictitious request, to which an answer *in his own hand* was desired. His hand was copied so well, that he confessed it might have deceived himself. Blackhead, who had carried the letter, being sent again with a plausible message, was very curious to see the house, and particularly importunate to be let into the study ; where, as is supposed,
he

he designed to leave the Association. This however was denied him, and he dropt it in a flower pot in the parlour.

Young now laid an information before the Privy Council; and May 7, 1692, the bishop was arrested, and kept at a messenger's under a strict guard eleven days. His house was searched, and directions were given that the flower-pots should be inspected. The messengers however missed the room in which the paper was left. Blackhead went therefore a third time; and finding his paper where he had left it, brought it away.

The bishop, having been enlarged, was, on June the 10th and 13th, examined again before the Privy Council, and confronted with his accusers. Young persisted with the most obdurate impudence, against the strongest evidence; but the resolution of Blackhead by degrees gave way. There remained at last no doubt of the bishop's innocence, who, with great prudence and diligence, traced the progress, and detected the characters of the two informers, and published an account of his own examination, and deliverance; which
made

made such an impreſſion upon him, that he commemorated it through life by an yearly day of thankſgiving.

With what hope, or what intereſt, the villains had contrived an accuſation which they muſt know themſelves utterly unable to prove, was never diſcovered.

After this, he paſſed his days in the quiet exerciſe of his function. When the cauſe of Sacheverell put the publick in commotion, he honeſtly appeared among the friends of the church. He lived to his ſeventy-ninth year, and died May 20, 1713.

Burnet is not very favourable to his memory ; but he and Burnet were old rivals. On ſome publick occaſion they both preached before the houſe of commons. There prevailed in thoſe days an indecent cuſtom ; when the preacher touched any favourite topick in a manner that delighted his audience, their approbation was expreſſed by a loud *hum*, continued in proportion to their zeal or pleaſure. When Burnet preached, part of his congregation *hummed* ſo loudly and ſo long, that

that he sat down to enjoy it, and rubbed his face with his handkerchief. When Sprat preached, he likewise was honoured with the like animating *bum*; but he stretched out his hand to the congregation, and cried, "Peace, peace, I pray you, peace."

This I was told in my youth by an old man, who had been no careless observer of the passages of those times.

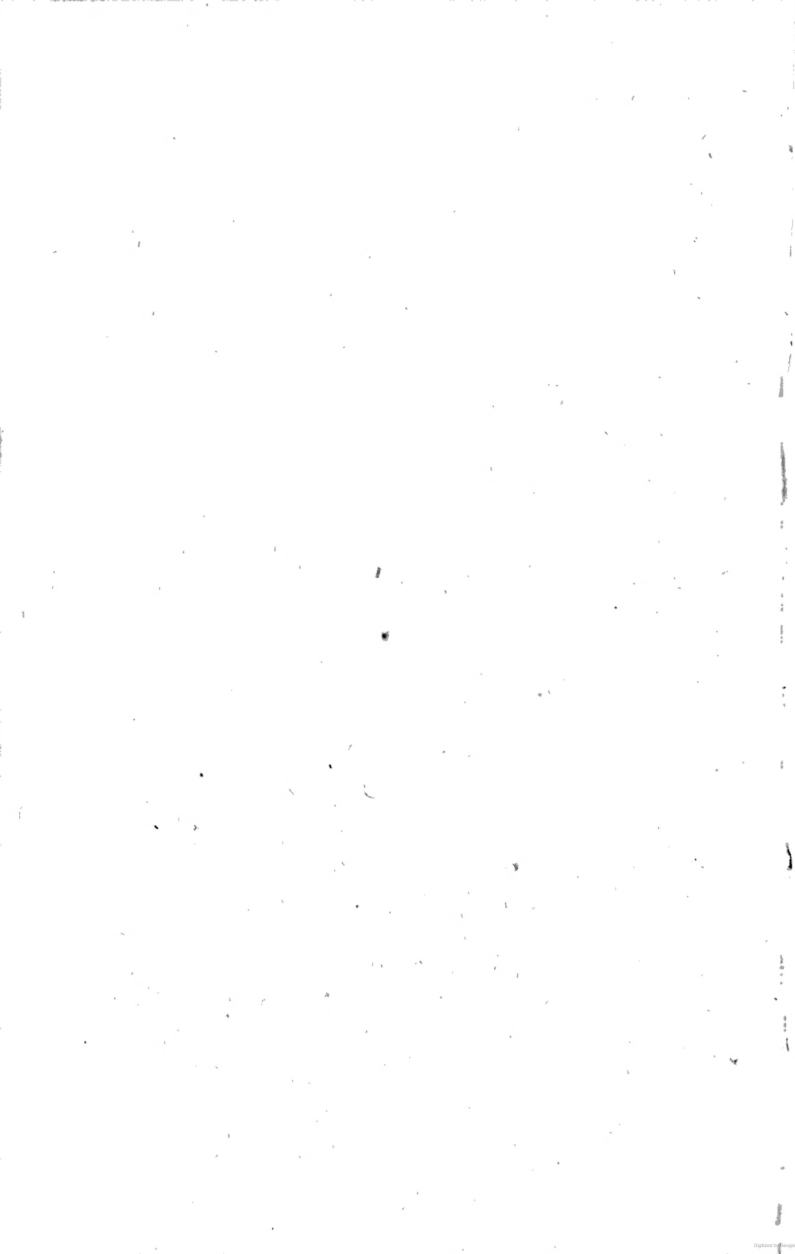
Burnet's sermon, says Salmon, was remarkable for sedition, and Sprat's for loyalty. Burnet had the thanks of the house; Sprat had no thanks, but a good living from the king; which, he said, was of as much value as the thanks of the Commons.

The works of Sprat, besides his few poems, are, The History of the Royal Society, The Life of Cowley, The Answer to Sorbiere, The History of the Ryehouse Plot; The Relation of his own Examination, and a volume of Sermons. I have heard it observed, with great justness, that every book is of a different kind, and that each has its distinct and characteristical excellence.

My business is only with his poems. He considered Cowley as a model; and supposed that as he was imitated, perfection was approached. Nothing therefore but Pindarick liberty was to be expected. There is in his few productions no want of such conceits as he thought excellent; and of those our judgment may be settled by the first that appears in his praise of Cromwell, where he says that Cromwell's *fame, like man, will grow white as it grows old.*

HALIFAX.

H A L I F A X.



H A L I F A X.

THE life of the Earl of Halifax was properly that of an artful and active statesman, employed in balancing parties, contriving expedients, and combating opposition, and exposed to the vicissitudes of advancement and degradation: but in this collection, poetical merit is the claim to attention; and the account which is here to be expected may properly be proportioned not to his influence in the state, but to his rank among the writers of verse.

Charles Montague was born April 16, 1661, at Horton in Northamptonshire, the

son of Mr. George Montague, a younger son of the earl of Manchester. He was educated first in the country, and then removed to Westminster; where in 1677 he was chosen a king's scholar, and recommended himself to Busby by his felicity in extemporary epigrams. He contracted a very intimate friendship with Mr. Stepney; and in 1682, when Stepney was elected to Cambridge, the election of Montague being not to proceed till the year following, he was afraid lest by being placed at Oxford he might be separated from his companion, and therefore solicited to be removed to Cambridge, without waiting for the advantages of another year.

It seems indeed time to wish for a removal; for he was already a school-boy of one and twenty.

His relation Dr. Montague was then master of the college in which he was placed a fellow commoner, and took him under his particular care. Here he commenced an acquaintance with the great Newton, which
continued

continued through his life, and was at last attested by a legacy.

In 1685, his verses on the death of king Charles made such impression on the earl of Dorset, that he was invited to town, and introduced by that universal patron to the other wits. In 1687, he joined with Prior in the *City Mouse and Country Mouse*, a burlesque of Dryden's *Hind and Panther*. He signed the invitation to the Prince of Orange, and sat in the convention. He about the same time married the countess dowager of Manchester, and intended to have taken orders ; but afterwards altering his purpose, he purchased for 1500 *l.* the place of one of the clerks of the council.

After he had written his epistle on the victory of the *Boyne*, his patron Dorset introduced him to king William with this expression : *Sir I have brought a Mouse to wait on your Majesty.* To which the king is said to have replied, *You do well to put me in the way of making a Man of him*; and ordered him a pension of five hundred pounds. This

story, however current, seems to have been made after the event. The king's answer implies a greater acquaintance with our proverbial and familiar diction than king William could possibly have attained.

In 1691, being member in the house of commons, he argued warmly in favour of a law to grant the assistance of counsel in trials for high treason; and in the midst of his speech, falling into some confusion, was for a while silent; but, recovering himself, observed, "how reasonable it was to allow counsel to men called as criminals before a court of justice, when it appeared how much the presence of that assembly could disconcert one of their own body."

After this he rose fast into honours and employments, being made one of the commissioners of the treasury, and called to the privy council. In 1694, he became chancellor of the Exchequer; and the next year engaged in the great attempt of the recoinage, which was in two years happily completed. In 1696, he projected the *general fund*, and raised the credit of the Exchequer;

chequer; and, after enquiry concerning a grant of Irish crown-lands, it was determined by a vote of the commons, that Charles Montague, esquire, *had deserved his Majesty's favour*. In 1698, being advanced to the first commission of the treasury, he was appointed one of the regency in the king's absence: the next year he was made auditor of the Exchequer; and the year after created *baron Halifax*. He was however impeached by the commons; but the articles were dismissed by the lords.

At the accession of queen Anne he was dismissed from the council; and in the first parliament of her reign was again attacked by the commons, and again escaped by the protection of the lords. In 1704, he wrote an answer to Bromley's speech against occasional conformity. He headed the Enquiry into the danger of the Church. In 1706, he proposed and negotiated the Union with Scotland; and when the elector of Hanover received the garter, after the act had passed for securing the Protestant Succession, he was appointed to carry the ensigns of the order to the electoral court. He sat as one
of

of the judges of Sacheverell ; but voted for a mild sentence. Being now no longer in favour, he contrived to obtain a writ for summoning the electoral prince to parliament as duke of Cambridge.

At the queen's death he was appointed one of the regents; and at the accession of George the First was made earl of Halifax, knight of the garter, and first commissioner of the treasury, with a grant to his nephew of the reversion of the auditorship of the Exchequer. More was not to be had, and this he kept but a little while ; for on the 19th of May, 1715, he died of an inflammation of his lungs.

Of him, who from a poet became a patron of poets, it will be readily believed that the works would not miss of celebration. Addison began to praise him early, and was followed or accompanied by other poets ; perhaps by almost all, except Swift and Pope ; who forbore to flatter him in his life, and after his death spoke of him, Swift with slight censure, and Pope in the character of Bufo with acrimonious contempt.

He was, as Pope says, *fed with dedications*; for Tickell affirms that no dedicator was unrewarded. To charge all unmerited praise with the guilt of flattery, and to suppose that the encomiast always knows and feels the falsehood of his assertions, is surely to discover great ignorance of human nature and human life. In determinations depending not on rules, but on experience and comparison, judgement is always in some degree subject to affection. Very near to admiration is the wish to admire.

Every man willingly gives value to the praise which he receives, and considers the sentence passed in his favour as the sentence of discernment. We admire in a friend that understanding that selected us for confidence; we admire more, in a patron, that judgement which, instead of scattering bounty indiscriminately, directed it to us; and those performances which gratitude forbids us to blame, affection will easily dispose us to exalt.

To these prejudices, hardly culpable, interest adds a power always operating, though not always, because not willingly, perceived. The modesty of praise wears gradually away; and perhaps the pride of patronage may be in time so increased, that modest praise will no longer please.

Many a blandishment was practised upon Halifax, which he would never have known, had he had no other attractions than those of his poetry, of which a short time has withered the beauties. It would now be esteemed no honour, by a contributor to the monthly bundles of verses, to be told, that, in strains either familiar or solemn, he sings like Montague.

PARNELL.

P A R N E L L.

P A R N E L L,

THE Life of Dr. PARNELL is a task which I should very willingly decline, since it has been lately written by Goldsmith, a man of such variety of powers, and such felicity of performance, that he always seemed to do best that which he was doing; a man who had the art of being minute without tediousness, and general without confusion; whose language was copious without exuberance, exact without constraint, and easy without weakness.

What such an author has told, who would tell again? I have made an abstract from his
larger

larger narrative; and shall have this gratification from my attempt, that it gives me an opportunity of paying due tribute to the memory of a departed genius.

Τὸ γὰρ γέρας ἐστὶ δαμότατον.

THOMAS PARNELL was the son of a commonwealthsman of the same name, who at the Restoration left Congleton in Cheshire, where the family had been established for several centuries, and, settling in Ireland, purchased an estate, which, with his lands in Cheshire, descended to the poet, who was born at Dublin in 1679; and, after the usual education at a grammar school, was at the age of thirteen admitted into the College, where, in 1700, he became master of arts; and was the same year ordained a deacon, though under the canonical age, by a dispensation from the bishop of Derry.

About three years afterwards he was made a priest; and in 1705 Dr. Ashe, the bishop of Clogher, conferred upon him the arch-deaconry of Clogher. About the same time he married Mrs. Anne Minchin, an amiable lady,

lady, by whom he had two sons who died young, and a daughter who long survived him.

At the ejection of the Whigs, in the end of queen Anne's reign, Parnell was persuaded to change his party, not without much censure from those whom he forsook, and was received by the new ministry as a valuable reinforcement. When the earl of Oxford was told that Dr. Parnell waited among the croud in the outer room, he went, by the persuasion of Swift, with his treasurer's staff in his hand, to enquire for him, and to bid him welcome; and, as may be inferred from Pope's dedication, admitted him as a favourite companion to his convivial hours, but, as it seems often to have happened in those times to the favourites of the great, without attention to his fortune, which indeed was in no great need of improvement.

Parnell, who did not want ambition or vanity, was desirous to make himself conspicuous, and to shew how worthy he was of high preferment, as he thought himself qualified to become a popular preacher, he displayed

played his elocution with great success in the pulpits of London; but the queen's death putting an end to his expectations, abated his diligence: and Pope represents him as falling from that time into intemperance of wine. That in his latter life he was too much a lover of the bottle, is not denied; but I have heard it imputed to a cause more likely to obtain forgiveness from mankind, the untimely death of a darling son; or, as others tell, the loss of his wife, who died (1712) in the midst of his expectations.

He was now to derive every future addition to his preferments from his personal interest with his private friends, and he was not long unregarded. He was warmly recommended by Swift to archbishop King, who gave him a prebend in 1713; and in May 1716 presented him to the vicarage of Finglas in the diocese of Dublin, worth four hundred pounds a year. Such notice from such a man, inclines me to believe that the vice of which he has been accused was not gross, or not notorious.

But his prosperity did not last long. His end, whatever was its cause, was now approaching.

proaching. He enjoyed his preferment little more than a year; for in July 1717, in his thirty-eighth year, he died at Chester, on his way to Ireland.

He seems to have been one of those poets who take delight in writing. He contributed to the papers of that time, and probably published more than he owned. He left many compositions behind him, of which Pope selected those which he thought best, and dedicated them to the earl of Oxford. Of these Goldsmith has given an opinion, and his criticism it is seldom safe to contradict. He bestows just praise upon the *Rise of Woman*, the *Fairy Tale*, and the *Pervigilium Veneris*; but has very properly remarked, that in the *Battle of Mice and Frogs* the Greek names have not in English their original effect.

He tells us, that the *Bookworm* is borrowed from *Beza*; but he should have added, with modern applications: and when he discovers that *Gay Bacchus* is translated from *Augurellus*, he ought to have remarked, that the latter part is purely Parnell's. Another

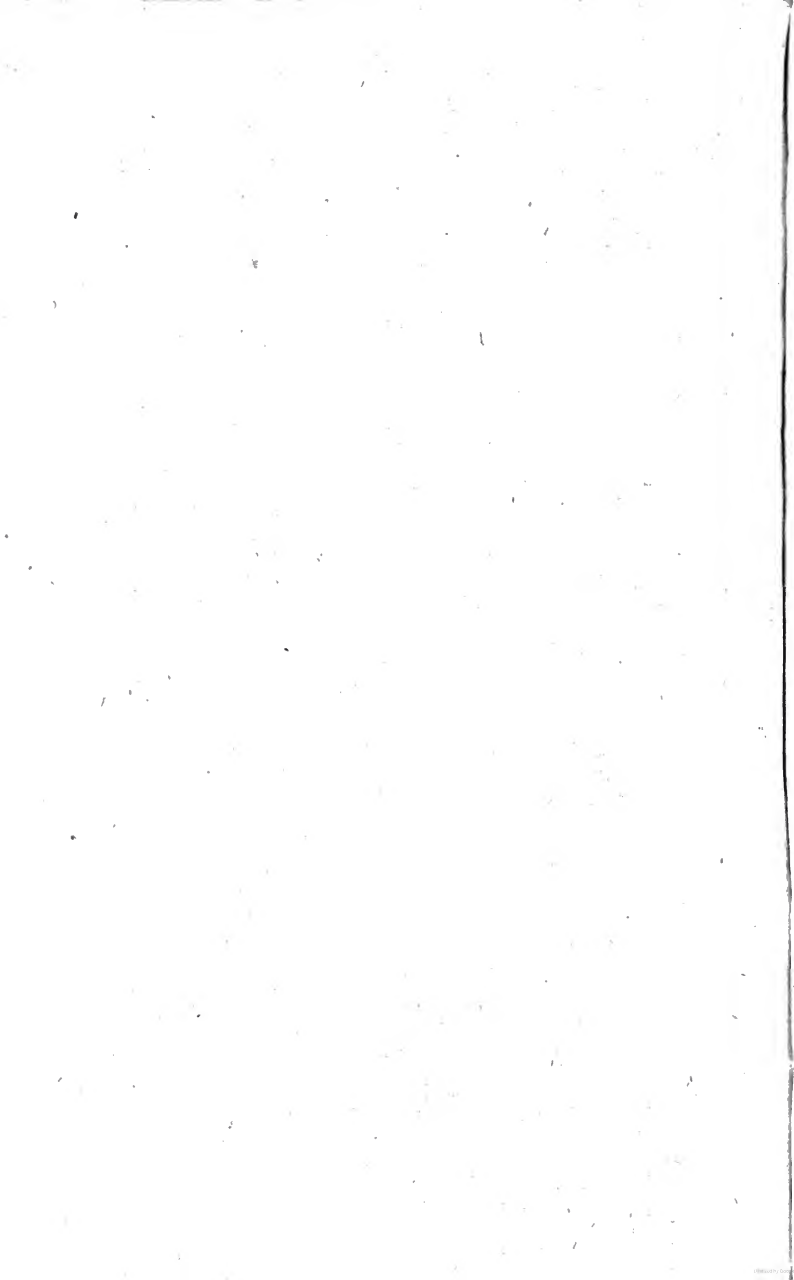
poem, *When Spring comes on*, is, he says, taken from the French. I would add, that the description of *Barrenness*, in his verses to Pope, was borrowed from *Secundus*; but lately searching for the passage which I had formerly read, I could not find it. The *Night-piece on Death* is indirectly preferred by Goldsmith to Gray's *Church-yard*; but, in my opinion, Gray has the advantage in dignity, variety, and originality of sentiment. He observes that the story of the *Hermit* is in *More's Dialogues* and *Howell's Letters*, and supposes it to have been originally *Arabian*.

Goldsmith has not taken any notice of the *Elegy to the old Beauty*, which is perhaps the meanest; nor of the *Allegory on Man*, the happiest of Parnell's performances. The hint of the *Hymn to Contentment* I suspect to have been borrowed from Cleiveland.

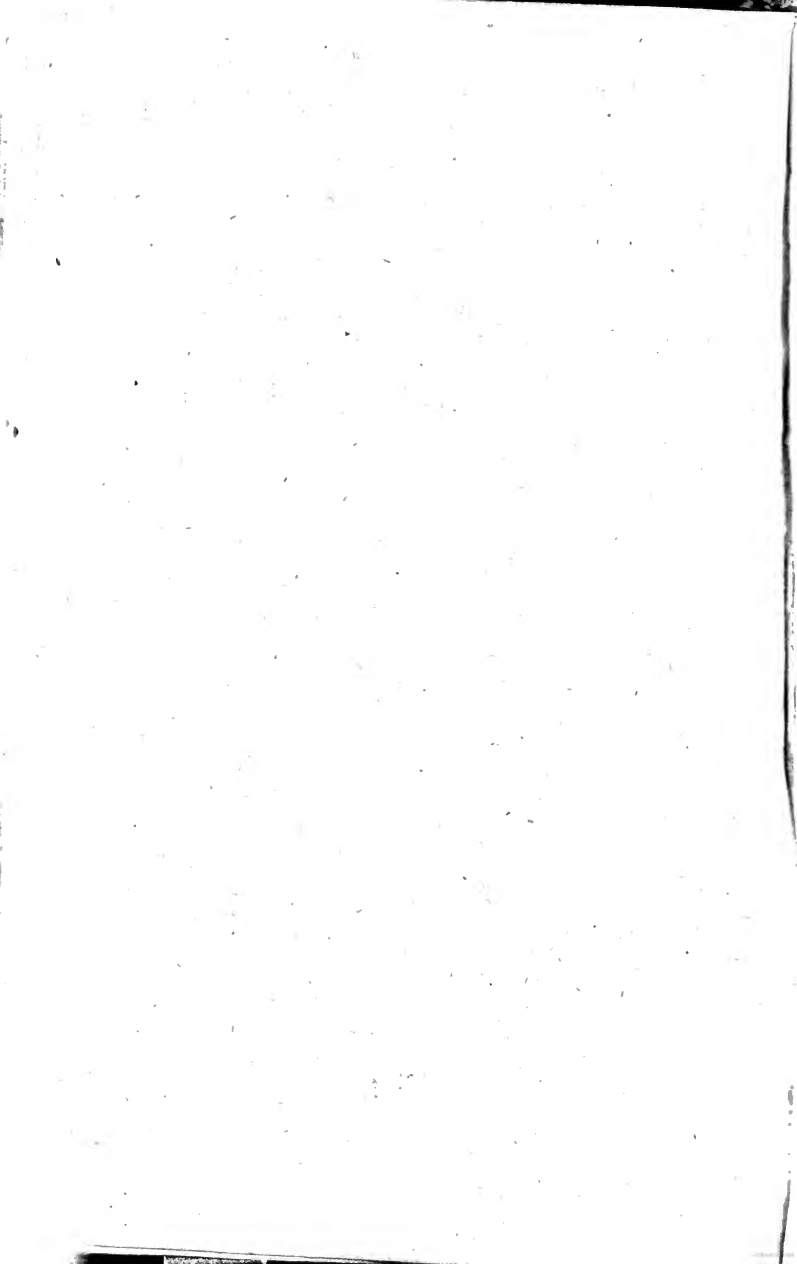
The general character of Parnell is not great extent of comprehension, or fertility of mind. Of the little that appears still less is his own. His praise must be derived from the easy sweetness of his diction: in his verses
there

there is *more happiness than pains*; he is spritely without effort, and always delights though he never ravishes; every thing is proper, yet every thing seems casual. If there is some appearance of elaboration in the *Hermit*, the narrative, as it is less airy, is less pleasing. Of his other compositions it is impossible to say whether they are the productions of Nature, so excellent as not to want the help of Art, or of Art so refined as to resemble Nature.

This criticism relates only to the pieces published by Pope. Of the large appendages which I find in the last edition, I can only say that I know not whence they came, nor have ever enquired whither they are going. They stand upon the faith of the compilers.



G A R T H.



G A R T H.

SAMUEL GARTH was of a good family in Yorkshire, and from some school in his own country became a student at Peter-house in Cambridge, where he resided till he commenced doctor of physick on July the 7th, 1691. He was examined before the College at London on March the 12th, 1691-2, and admitted fellow July 26th, 1692. He was soon so much distinguished, by his conversation and accomplishments, as to obtain very extensive practice; and, if a pamphlet of those times may be credited, had the favour and confidence of one party, as Ratcliffe had of the other.

He is always mentioned as a man of benevolence; and it is just to suppose that his desire of helping the helpless, disposed him

to so much zeal for the *Dispensary*; an undertaking of which some account, however short, is proper to be given.

Whether what Temple says be true, that physicians have had more learning than the other faculties, I will not stay to enquire; but, I believe, every man has found in physicians great liberality, and dignity of sentiment, very prompt effusion of beneficence, and willingness to exert a lucrative art, where there is no hope of lucre. Agreeably to this character, the College of Physicians, in July 1687, published an edict, requiring all the fellows, candidates, and licentiates, to give gratuitous advice to the neighbouring poor.

This edict was sent to the Court of Aldermen; and a question being made to whom the appellation of the *poor* should be extended, the College answered, that it should be sufficient to bring a testimonial from a clergyman officiating in the parish where the patient resided.

After a year's experience, the physicians found their charity frustrated by some malignant

lignant opposition, and made to a great degree vain by the high price of physick; they therefore voted, in August 1688, that the laboratory of the College should be accommodated to the preparation of medicines, and another room prepared for their reception; and that the contributors to the expence should manage the charity.

It was now expected that the Apothecaries would have undertaken the care of providing medicines; but they took another course. Thinking the whole design pernicious to their interest, they endeavoured to raise a faction against it in the College, and found some physicians mean enough to solicit their patronage, by betraying to them the counsels of the College. The greater part, however, enforced by a new edict in 1694, the former order of 1687, and sent it to the mayor and aldermen, who appointed a committee to treat with the College, and settle the mode of administering the Charity.

It was desired by the aldermen, that the testimonials of churchwardens and overseers should be admitted; and that all hired servants, and all apprentices to handicraftsmen,
5 should

should be considered as *poor*. This likewise was granted by the College.

It was then considered who should distribute the medicines, and who should settle their prices. The physicians procured some apothecaries to undertake the dispensation, and offered that the warden and company of the apothecaries should adjust the price. This offer was rejected; and the apothecaries who had engaged to assist the charity were considered as traitors to the company, threatened with the imposition of troublesome offices, and deterred from the performance of their engagements. The apothecaries ventured upon publick opposition, and presented a kind of remonstrance against the design to the committee of the city, which the physicians condescended to confute: and at last the traders seem to have prevailed among the sons of trade; for the proposal of the college having been considered, a paper of approbation was drawn up, but postponed and forgotten.

The physicians still persisted; and in 1696 a subscription was raised by themselves, according to an agreement prefixed to the
Dis-

Dispensary. The poor were for a time supplied with medicines; for how long a time, I know not. The medicinal charity, like others, began with ardour, but soon remitted, and at last died gradually away.

About the time of the subscription begins the action of the *Dispensary*. The Poem, as its subject was present and popular, co-operated with passions and prejudices then prevalent, and, with such auxiliaries to its intrinsic merit, was universally and liberally applauded. It was on the side of charity against the intrigues of interest, and of regular learning against licentious usurpation of medical authority, and was therefore naturally favoured by those who read and can judge of poetry.

In 1697, Garth spoke that which is now called the *Harveian Oration*; which the authors of the *Biographia* mention with more praise than the passage quoted in their notes will fully justify. Garth, speaking of the mischiefs done by quacks, has these expressions: “Non tamen telis vulnerat ista agyrtarum colluvies, sed theriacâ quadam magis perniciofa, non pyrio, sed pulvere
 3 “nescio

“nescio quo exotico certat, non globulis
“plumbeis, sed pilulis æque lethalibus in-
“terficit.” This was certainly thought fine
by the author, and is still admired by his
biographer. In October 1702 he became
one of the censors of the College.

Garth, being an active and zealous Whig,
was a member of the Kit-cat club, and by
consequence familiarly known to all the
great men of that denomination. In 1710,
when the government fell into other hands,
he writ to lord Godolphin, on his dismissal,
a short poem, which was criticised in the
Examiner, and so successfully either defended
or excused by Mr. Addison, that, for the
sake of the vindication, it ought to be pre-
served.

At the accession of the present Family his
merits were acknowledged and rewarded.
He was knighted with the sword of his hero,
Marlborough; and was made physician in
ordinary to the king, and physician-general
to the army.

He then undertook an edition of Ovid's
Metamorphoses, translated by several hands;
which

which he recommended by a Preface, written with more ostentation than ability: his notions are half-formed, and his materials immethodically confused. This was his last work. He died Jan. 18, 1717-18, and was buried at Harrow-on-the-Hill.

His personal character seems to have been social and liberal. He communicated himself through a very wide extent of acquaintance; and though firm in a party, at a time when firmness included virulence, yet he imparted his kindness to those who were not supposed to favour his principles. He was an early encourager of Pope, and was at once the friend of Addison and of Granville. He is accused of voluptuousness and irreligion; and Pope, who says that "if ever there was a good Christian, without knowing himself to be so, it was Dr. Garth," seems not able to deny what he is angry to hear and loth to confess.

His poetry has been praised at least equally to its merit. In the *Dispensary* there is a strain of smooth and free versification; but few lines are eminently elegant. No passages

sages fall below mediocrity, and few rise much above it. The plan seems formed without just proportion to the subject; the means and end have no necessary connection. *Resnel*, in his Preface to *Pope's Essay*, remarks, that Garth exhibits no discrimination of characters; and that what any one says might with equal propriety have been said by another. The general design is perhaps open to criticism; but the composition can seldom be charged with inaccuracy or negligence. The author never slumbers in self-indulgence; his full vigour is always exerted; scarce a line is left unfinished, nor is it easy to find an expression used by constraint, or a thought imperfectly expressed. It was remarked by Pope, that the *Dispensary* had been corrected in every edition, and that every change was an improvement. It appears, however, to want something of poetical ardour, and something of general delectation; and therefore, since it has been no longer supported by accidental and extrinſick popularity, it has been scarcely able to support itself.

R O W E.

R O W E.

VOL. II.

Y



R O W E.

NICHOLAS ROWE was born at Little Beckford in Bedfordshire, in 1673. His family had long possessed a considerable estate, with a good house, at Lambertoun * in Devonshire. The ancestor from whom he descended in a direct line, received the arms borne by his descendants for his bravery in the Holy War. His father John Rowe, who was the first that quitted his paternal acres to practise any art of profit, professed the law, and published Benlow's and Dallison's Reports in the reign of James the Second, when, in opposition to the notions

* In the Villare, *Lamerton*.

then diligently propagated, of dispensing power, he ventured to remark how low his authors rated the prerogative. He was made a serjeant, and died April 30, 1692. He was buried in the Temple Church.

Nicholas was first sent to a private school at Highgate; and being afterwards removed to Westminster, was at twelve years chosen one of the King's scholars. His master was Busby, who suffered none of his scholars to let their powers lie useless; and his exercises in several languages are said to have been written with uncommon degrees of excellence, and yet to have cost him very little labour.

At sixteen he had in his father's opinion made advances in learning sufficient to qualify him for the study of law, and was entered a student of the Middle Temple, where for some time he read statutes and reports with proficiency proportionate to the force of his mind, which was already such that he endeavoured to comprehend law, not as a series of precedents, or collection of positive precepts, but as a system of rational government, and impartial justice,

When

When he was nineteen, he was by the death of his father left more to his own direction, and probably from that time suffered law gradually to give way to poetry. At twenty-five he produced *The Ambitious Stepmother*, which was received with so much favour, that he devoted himself from that time wholly to the more elegant parts of writing.

His next tragedy (1702) was *Tamerlane*, in which, under the name of Tamerlane, he intended to characterise king William, and Lewis the Fourteenth under that of Bajazet. The virtues of Tamerlane seem to have been arbitrarily assigned him by his poet, for I know not that history gives any other qualities than those which make a conqueror. The fashion however of the time was, to accumulate upon Lewis all that can raise horror and detestation; and whatever good was withheld from him, that it might not be thrown away, was bestowed upon king William.

This was the tragedy which Rowe valued most, and that which probably, by the help of political auxiliaries, excited most applause;

but occasional poetry must often content itself with occasional praise. Tamerlane has for a long time been acted only once a year, on the night when king William landed. Our quarrel with Lewis has been long over, and it now gratifies neither zeal nor malice to see him painted with aggravated features, like a Saracen upon a sign.

The *Fair Penitent*, his next production (1703), is one of the most pleasing tragedies on the stage, where it still keeps its turns of appearing, and probably will long keep them, for there is scarcely any work of any poet at once so interesting by the fable, and so delightful by the language. The story is domestic, and therefore easily received by the imagination, and assimilated to common life; the diction is exquisitely harmonious, and soft or spritely as occasion requires.

The character of *Lothario* seems to have been expanded by Richardson into *Lovelace*, but he has excelled his original in the moral effect of the fiction. *Lothario*, with gaiety which cannot be hated, and bravery which cannot be despised, retains too much of
the

the spectator's kindness. It was in the power of Richardson alone to teach us at once esteem and detestation, to make virtuous resentment overpower all the benevolence which wit, and elegance, and courage, naturally excite; and to lose at last the hero in the villain.

The fifth act is not equal to the former; the events of the drama are exhausted, and little remains but to talk of what is past. It has been observed, that the title of the play does not sufficiently correspond with the behaviour of Calista, who at last shews no evident signs of repentance, but may be reasonably suspected of feeling pain from detection rather than from guilt, and expresses more shame than sorrow, and more rage than shame.

His next (1706) was *Ulysses*; which, with the common fate of mythological stories, is now generally neglected. We have been too early acquainted with the poetical heroes, to expect any pleasure from their revival; to shew them as they have already been shewn, is to disgust by repetition; to give them new qualities or new adventures, is to offend by violating received notions.

The *Royal Convert* (1708) seems to have a better claim to longevity. The fable is drawn from an obscure and barbarous age, to which fictions are most easily and properly adapted; for when objects are imperfectly seen, they easily take forms from imagination. The scene lies among our ancestors in our own country, and therefore very easily catches attention. *Rhodogune* is a personage truly tragical, of high spirit, and violent passions, great with tempestuous dignity, and wicked with a soul that would have been heroic if it had been virtuous. The motto seems to tell that this play was not successful.

Rowe does not always remember what his characters require. In *Tamerlane* there is some ridiculous mention of the God of Love; and *Rhodogune*, a savage Saxon, talks of Venus, and the eagle that bears the thunder of Jupiter.

This play discovers its own date, by a prediction of the *Union*, in imitation of Cranmer's prophetick promises to *Henry the Eighth*. The anticipated blessings of union are not
very

very naturally introduced, nor very happily expressed.

He once (1706) tried to change his hand. He ventured on a comedy, and produced the *Biter*; with which, though it was unfavourably treated by the audience, he was himself delighted; for he is said to have sat in the house, laughing with great vehemence, whenever he had in his own opinion produced a jest. But finding that he and the publick had no sympathy of mirth, he tried at lighter scenes no more.

After the Royal Convert (1714) appeared *Jane Shore*, written, as its author professes, *in imitation of Shakspeare's style*. In what he thought himself an imitator of Shakspeare, it is not easy to conceive. The numbers, the diction, the sentiments, and the conduct, every thing in which imitation can consist, are remote in the utmost degree from the manner of Shakspeare; whose dramas it resembles only as it is an English story, and as some of the persons have their names in history. This play, consisting chiefly of domestick scenes and private distress, lays hold
upon

upon the heart. The wife is forgiven because she repents, and the husband is honoured because he forgives. This therefore is one of those pieces which we still welcome on the stage.

His last tragedy (1715) was *Lady Jane Grey*. This subject had been chosen by Mr. Smith, whose papers were put into Rowe's hands such as he describes them in his Preface. This play likewise has sunk into oblivion. From this time he gave nothing more to the stage.

Being by a competent fortune exempted from any necessity of combating his inclination, he never wrote in distress, and therefore does not appear to have ever written in haste. His works were finished to his own approbation, and bear few marks of negligence or hurry. It is remarkable that his prologues and epilogues are all his own, though he sometimes supplied others; he afforded help, but did not solicit it.

As his studies necessarily made him acquainted with Shakspeare, and acquaintance produced

produced veneration, he undertook (1709) an edition of his works, from which he neither received much praise, nor seems to have expected it; yet, I believe, those who compare it with former copies, will find that he has done more than he promised; and that, without the pomp of notes or boasts of criticism, many passages are happily restored. He prefixed a life of the author, such as tradition then almost expiring could supply, and a preface, which cannot be said to discover much profundity or penetration. He at least contributed to the popularity of his author.

He was willing enough to improve his fortune by other arts than poetry. He was undersecretary for three years when the duke of Queensberry was secretary of state, and afterwards applied to the earl of Oxford for some publick employment*. Oxford enjoined him to study Spanish; and when, some time afterwards, he came again, and said that he had mastered it, dismissed him with this congratulation, "Then, Sir, I envy you the pleasure of reading Don Quixot in the original."

* Spence.

This story is sufficiently attested; but why Oxford, who desired to be thought a favourer of literature, should thus insult a man of acknowledged merit; or how Rowe, who was so keen a Whig* that he did not willingly converse with men of the opposite party, could ask preferment from Oxford, it is not now possible to discover. Pope, who told the story, did not say on what occasion the advice was given; and though he owned Rowe's disappointment, doubted whether any injury was intended him, but thought it rather lord Oxford's *odd way*.

It is likely that he lived on discontented through the rest of queen Anne's reign; but the time came at last when he found kinder friends. At the accession of king George, he was made poet laureat; I am afraid by the ejection of poor Nahum Tate, who (1716) died in the Mint, where he was forced to seek shelter for extreme poverty. He was made likewise one of the land surveyors of the customs of the port of London. The prince of Wales chose him clerk of his coun-

* Spence.

cil; and the lord chancellor Parker, as soon as he received the seals, appointed him, unasked, secretary of the presentations. Such an accumulation of employments undoubtedly produced a very considerable revenue.

Having already translated some parts of *Lucan's Pharsalia*, which had been published in the Miscellanies, and doubtless received many praises, he undertook a version of the whole work, which he lived to finish, but not to publish. It seems to have been printed under the care of Dr. Welwood, who prefixed the author's life, in which is contained the following character:

“ As to his person it was graceful and well-
“ made; his face regular, and of a manly
“ beauty. As his soul was well lodged, so
“ its rational and animal faculties excelled
“ in a high degree. He had a quick and
“ fruitful invention, a deep penetration, and
“ a large compass of thought, with singular
“ dexterity and easiness in making his
“ thoughts to be understood. He was mas-
“ ter of most parts of polite learning, espe-
“ cially the classical authors, both Greek
“ and

“ and Latin; understood the French, Italian,
“ and Spanish Languages, and spoke the first
“ fluently, and the other two tolerably well.

“ He had likewise read most of the Greek
“ and Roman histories in their original lan-
“ guages, and most that are wrote in English,
“ French, Italian, and Spanish. He had a
“ good taste in philosophy; and, having a
“ firm impresson of religion upon his mind,
“ he took great delight in divinity and eccle-
“ siastical history, in both which he made
“ great advances in the times he retired into
“ the country, which were frequent. He
“ expressed, on all occasions, his full persua-
“ sion of the truth of Revealed Religion;
“ and being a sincere member of the establish-
“ ed church himself, he pitied, but con-
“ demned not, those that dissented from it.
“ He abhorred the principles of persecuting
“ men upon the account of their opinions in
“ religion; and being strict in his own, he
“ took it not upon him to censure those of
“ another persuasion. His conversation was
“ pleasant, witty, and learned, without the
“ least tincture of affectation or pedantry;
“ and his inimitable manner of diverting and
“ enlivening the company, made it impossi-
“ ble

“ ble for any one to be out of humour when
“ he was in it. Envy and detraction seem-
“ ed to be entirely foreign to his constitu-
“ tion; and whatever provocations he met
“ with at any time, he passed them over with-
“ out the least thought of resentment or re-
“ venge. As Homer had a Zoilus, so Mr.
“ Rowe had sometimes his; for there were
“ not wanting malevolent people, and pre-
“ tenders to poetry too, that would now-and-
“ then bark at his best performances; but
“ he was so much conscious of his own ge-
“ nius, and had so much good-nature as to
“ forgive them; nor could he ever be tempt-
“ ed to return them an answer.

“ The love of learning and poetry made
“ him not the less fit for business, and no-
“ body applied himself closer to it, when it
“ required his attendance. The late duke of
“ Queensberry, when he was secretary of state,
“ made him his secretary for publick affairs;
“ and when that truly great man came to know
“ him well, he was never so pleased as when
“ Mr. Rowe was in his company. After
“ the duke's death, all avenues were stopped
“ to his preferment; and during the rest of
“ that

“ that reign, he passed his time with the
“ Muses and his books, and sometimes the
“ conversation of his friends.

“ When he had just got to be easy in his
“ fortune, and was in a fair way to make it
“ better, death swept him away, and in him
“ deprived the world of one of the best men
“ as well as one of the best geniuses of the
“ age. He died like a Christian and a Phi-
“ losopher, in charity with all mankind,
“ and with an absolute resignation to the
“ will of God. He kept up his good-
“ humour to the last; and took leave of
“ his wife and friends, immediately before
“ his last agony, with the same tranquillity
“ of mind, and the same indifference for
“ life, as though he had been upon taking
“ but a short journey. He was twice mar-
“ ried, first to a daughter of Mr. Parsons,
“ one of the auditors of the revenue; and af-
“ terwards to a daughter of Mr. Devenish,
“ of a good family in Dorsetshire. By the
“ first he had a son; and by the second a
“ daughter, married afterwards to Mr. Fane.
“ He died the sixth of December, 1718, in
“ the forty-fifth year of his age; and was
“ buried

“ Mr. Addison was justly offended with some
“ behaviour which arose from that want,
“ and estranged himself from him ; which
“ Rowe felt very severely. Mr. Pope, their
“ common friend, knowing this, took an op-
“ portunity, at some juncture of Mr. Addi-
“ son’s advancement, to tell him how poor
“ Rowe was grieved at his displeasure, and
“ what satisfaction he expressed at Mr. Ad-
“ dison’s good fortune ; which he expressed
“ so naturally, that he (Mr. Pope) could
“ not but think him sincere. Mr. Addison
“ replied, ‘ I do not suspect that he feigned ;
“ but the levity of his heart is such, that he
“ is struck with any new adventure ; and it
“ would affect him just in the same manner,
“ if he heard I was going to be hanged.’—
“ Mr. Pope said, he could not deny but Mr.
“ Addison understood Rowe well.”

This censure time has not left us the power
of confirming or refuting ; but observation
daily shews, that much stress is not to be laid
on hyperbolical accusations, and pointed sen-
tences, which even he that utters them de-
sires to be applauded rather than credited.
Addison can hardly be supposed to have meant
all

all that he said. Few characters can bear the microscopick scrutiny of wit quickened by anger ; and perhaps the best advice to authors would be, that they should keep out of the way of one another.

Rowe is chiefly to be considered as a tragick writer and a translator. In his attempt at comedy he failed so ignominiously, that his *Biter* is not inserted in his works ; and his occasional poems and short compositions are rarely worthy of either praise or censure ; for they seem the casual sports of a mind seeking rather to amuse its leisure than to exercise its powers.

In the construction of his dramas, there is not much art ; he is not a nice observer of the Unities. He extends time and varies place as his convenience requires. To vary the place is not, in my opinion, any violation of Nature, if the change be made between the acts ; for it is no less easy for the spectator to suppose himself at Athens in the second act, than at Thebes in the first ; but to change the scene, as is done by Rowe, in the middle of an act, is to add more acts to the play, since

an act is so much of the business as is transacted without interruption. Rowe, by this licence, easily extricates himself from difficulties; as in *Jane Grey*, when we have been terrified with all the dreadful pomp of publick execution, and are wondering how the heroine or the poet will proceed, no sooner has *Jane* pronounced some prophetick rhymes, than—pass and be gone—the scene closes, and *Pembroke* and *Gardiner* are turned out upon the stage.

I know not that there can be found in his plays any deep search into nature, any accurate discriminations of kindred qualities, or nice display of passion in its progress; all is general and undefined. Nor does he much interest or affect the auditor, except in *Jane Shore*, who is always seen and heard with pity. *Alicia* is a character of empty noise, with no resemblance to real sorrow or to natural madness.

Whence, then, has Rowe his reputation? From the reasonableness and propriety of some of his scenes, from the elegance of his diction, and the suavity of his verse. He seldom
moves

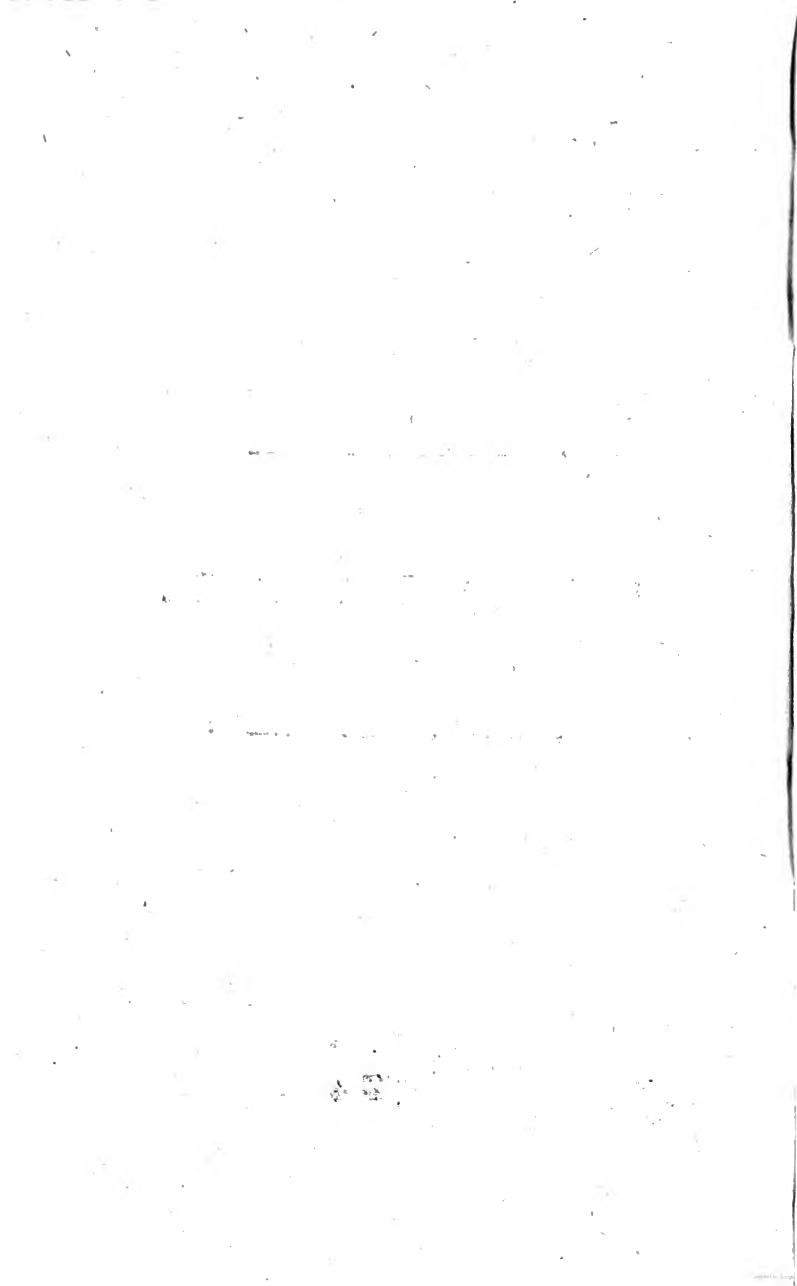
moves either pity or terror, but he often elevates the sentiments ; he seldom pierces the breast, but he always delights the ear, and often improves the understanding.

His translation of the *Golden Verses*, and of the first book of *Quillet's Poem*, have nothing in them remarkable. The *Golden Verses* are tedious. The version of *Lucan* is one of the greatest productions of English poetry ; for there is perhaps none that so completely exhibits the genius and spirit of the original. *Lucan* is distinguished by a kind of dictatorial or philosophick dignity, rather, as *Quintilian* observes, declamatory than poetical ; full of ambitious morality and pointed sentences, comprised in vigorous and animated lines. This character Rowe has very diligently and successfully preserved. His versification, which is such as his contemporaries practised, without any attempt at innovation or improvement, seldom wants either melody or force. His author's sense is sometimes a little diluted by additional infusions, and sometimes weakened by too much expansion. But such faults are to be expected in all translations, from the constraint of measures and

diffimilitude of languages. The *Pharsalia* of Rowe deserves more notice than it obtains, and as it is more read will be more esteemed.

ADDISON.

A D D I S O N.



A D D I S O N.

JOSEPH ADDISON was born on the first of May, 1672, at Milston, of which his father, Lancelot Addison, was then rector, near Ambrosbury in Wiltshire, and appearing weak and unlikely to live, he was christened the same day. After the usual domestick education, which, from the character of his father, may be reasonably supposed to have given him strong impressions of piety, he was committed to the care of Mr. Naish at Ambrosbury, and afterwards of Mr. Taylor at Salisbury.

Not to name the school or the masters of men illustrious for literature, is a kind of historical fraud, by which honest fame is injuriously

juriously diminished: I would therefore trace him through the whole process of his education. In 1683, in the beginning of his twelfth year, his father being made dean of Lichfield, naturally carried his family to his new residence, and, I believe, placed him for some time, probably not long, under Mr. Shaw, then master of the school at Lichfield, father of the late Dr. Peter Shaw. Of this interval his biographers have given no account, and I know it only from a story of a *barring-out*, told me, when I was a boy, by Andrew Corbet of Shropshire, who had heard it from Mr. Pigot his uncle.

The practice of *barring-out*, was a savage license, practised in many schools to the end of the last century, by which the boys, when the periodical vacation drew near, growing petulant at the approach of liberty, some days before the time of regular recess, took possession of the school, of which they barred the doors, and bade their master defiance from the windows. It is not easy to suppose that on such occasions the master would do more than laugh; yet, if tradition may be credited, he often struggled hard to
force

force or surprize the garrison. The master, when Pigot was a school-boy, was *barred-out* at Lichfield, and the whole operation, as he said, was planned and conducted by Addison.

To judge better of the probability of this story, I have enquired when he was sent to the Chartreux ; but, as he was not one of those who enjoyed the Founder's benefaction, there is no account preserved of his admission. At the school of the Chartreux, to which he was removed either from that of Salisbury or Lichfield, he pursued his juvenile studies under the care of Dr. Ellis, and contracted that intimacy with Sir Richard Steele, which their joint labours have so effectually recorded,

Of this memorable friendship the greater praise must be given to Steele. It is not hard to love those from whom nothing can be feared, and Addison never considered Steele as a rival ; but Steele lived, as he confesses, under an habitual subjection to the predominating genius of Addison, whom he always mentioned with reverence, and treated with obsequiousness.

Addison*, who knew his own dignity, could not always forbear to shew it, by playing a little upon his admirer; but he was in no danger of retort: his jests were endured without resistance or resentment.

But the sneer of jocularitv was not the worst. Steele, whose imprudence of generosity, or vanity of profusion, kept him always incurably necessitous, upon some pressing exigence, in an evil hour, borrowed an hundred pounds of his friend, probably without much purpose of repayment; but Addison, who seems to have had other notions of a hundred pounds, grew impatient of delay, and reclaimed his loan by an execution. Steele felt with great sensibility the obduracy of his creditor; but with emotions of sorrow rather than of anger.

In 1687 he was entered into Queen's College in Oxford, where, in 1689, the accidental perusal of some Latin verses gained him the patronage of Dr. Lancaster, afterwards provost of Queen's College; by whose

* Spence.

recommendation he was elected into Magdalen College as a Demy, a term by which that society denominates those which are elsewhere called Scholars; young men, who partake of the founder's benefaction, and succeed in their order to vacant fellowships*.

Here he continued to cultivate poetry and criticism, and grew first eminent by his Latin compositions, which are indeed entitled to particular praise. He has not confined himself to the imitation of any ancient author, but has formed his style from the general language, such as a diligent perusal of the productions of different ages happened to supply.

His Latin compositions seem to have had much of his fondness; for he collected a second volume of the *Musæ Anglicanæ*, perhaps for a convenient receptacle, in which all his Latin pieces are inserted, and where his Poem on the Peace has the first place. He afterwards presented the collection to Boi-

* He took the degree of M. A. Feb. 14, 1693.

leau, who from that time *conceived*, says Tickell, *an opinion of the English genius for poetry*. Nothing is better known of Boileau, than that he had an injudicious and peevish contempt of modern Latin, and therefore his profession of regard was probably the effect of his civility rather than approbation.

Three of his Latin poems are upon subjects on which perhaps he would not have ventured to have written in his own language. *The Battle of the Pigmies and Cranes*; *The Barometer*; and *a Bowling-green*. When the matter is low or scanty, a dead language, in which nothing is mean because nothing is familiar, affords great conveniences; and by the sonorous magnificence of Roman syllables, the writer conceals penury of thought, and want of novelty, often from the reader, and often from himself.

In his twenty-second year he first shewed his power of English poetry, by some verses addressed to Dryden; and soon afterwards published a translation of the greater part of the Fourth Georgick upon Bees; after which, says Dryden, *my latter swarm is hardly worth the hiving*.

About

About the same time he composed the arguments prefixed to the several books of Dryden's Virgil; and produced an Essay on the Georgicks, juvenile, superficial, and un-instructive, without much either of the scholar's learning or the critick's penetration.

His next paper of verses contained a character of the principal English poets, inscribed to Henry Sacheverell, who was then, if not a poet, a writer of verses; as is shewn by his version of a small part of Virgil's Georgicks, published in the Miscellanies, and a Latin encomium on queen Mary, in the Musæ Anglicanæ. These verses exhibit all the fondness of friendship; but on one side or the other, friendship was too weak for the malignity of faction.

In this poem is a very confident and discriminative character of Spenser, whose work he had then never read*. So little sometimes is criticism the effect of judgement. It is necessary to inform the reader, that about this time he was introduced by Con-

* Spence.

greve to Montague, then Chancellor of the Exchequer : Addison was then learning the trade of a courtier, and subjoined Montague as a poetical name to those of Cowley and of Dryden.

By the influence of Mr. Montague, concurring, according to Tickell, with his natural modesty, he was diverted from his original design of entering into holy orders. Montague alleged the corruption of men who engaged in civil employments without liberal education ; and declared, that, though he was represented as an enemy to the Church, he would never do it any injury but by withholding Addison from it.

Soon after (in 1695) he wrote a poem to king William, with a kind of rhyming introduction addressed to lord Somers. King William had no regard to elegance or literature ; his study was only war ; yet by a choice of ministers, whose disposition was very different from his own, he procured, without intention, a very liberal patronage to poetry. Addison was caressed both by Somers and Montague.

In

In 1697, he wrote his poem on the peace of Ryfwick, which he dedicated to Montague, and which was afterwards called by Smith *the best Latin poem since the Æneid*. Praise must not be too rigorously examined; but the performance cannot be denied to be vigorous and elegant.

Having yet no publick employment, he obtained (in 1699) a pension of three hundred pounds a year, that he might be enabled to travel. He staid a year at Blois*, probably to learn the French language; and then proceeded in his journey to Italy, which he surveyed with the eyes of a poet.

While he was travelling at leisure, he was far from being idle; for he not only collected his observations on the country, but found time to write his Dialogues on Medals, and four acts of Cato. Such is the relation of Tickell. Perhaps he only collected his materials, and formed his plan:

Whatever were his other employments in Italy, he there wrote the letter to lord Hali-

* Spence.

VOL. II.

A a

fax,

fax, which is justly considered as the most elegant, if not the most sublime, of his poetical productions. But in about two years he found it necessary to hasten home; being, as Swift informs us, distressed by indigence, and compelled to become the tutor of a travelling Squire.

At his return he published his *Travels*, with a dedication to lord Somers. As his stay in foreign countries was short, his observations are such as might be supplied by a hasty view, and consist chiefly in comparisons of the present face of the country with the descriptions left us by the Roman poets, from whom he made preparatory collections, of which he might have spared the trouble, had he known that such collections had been made twice before by Italian authors.

The most amusing passage of his book,* is his account of the minute republick of San Marino; of many parts it is not a very severe censure to say that they might have been written at home. His elegance of language, and variegation of prose and verse, however, gains upon the reader; and the book, though

a while neglected, became in time so much the favourite of the publick, that before it was reprinted it rose to five times its price.

When he returned to England (in 1702), with a meanness of appearance which gave testimony of the difficulties to which he had been reduced, he found his old patrons out of power, and was therefore for a time at full leisure for the cultivation of his mind, and a mind so cultivated gives reason to believe that little time was lost.

But he remained not long neglected or useless. The victory at Blenheim (1704) spread triumph and confidence over the nation; and lord Godolphin lamenting to lord Halifax, that it had not been celebrated in a manner equal to the subject, desired him to propose it to some better poet. Halifax told him that there was no encouragement for genius; that worthless men were unprofitably enriched with publick money, without any care to find or employ those whose appearance might do honour to their country. To this Godolphin replied, that such abuses should in time be rectified; and that if a

man could be found capable of the task then proposed; he should not want an ample recompense. Halifax then named Addison; but required that the Treasurer should apply to him in his own person. Godolphin sent the message by Mr. Boyle, afterwards lord Carleton; and Addison having undertaken the work, communicated it to the Treasurer, while it was yet advanced no further than the simile of the Angel, and was immediately rewarded by succeeding Mr. Locke in the place of *Commissioner of Appeals*.

In the following year he was at Hanover with lord Halifax; and the year after was made under-secretary of state, first to Sir Charles Hedges, and in a few months more to the earl of Sunderland.

About this time the prevalent taste for Italian operas inclined him to try what would be the effect of a musical Drama in our own language. He therefore wrote the opera of Rosamond, which, when exhibited on the stage, was either hissed or neglected; but trusting that the readers would do him more justice, he published it, with an inscription

tion to the dutchefs of Marlborough ; a woman without skill, or pretensions to skill, in poetry or literature. His dedication was therefore an instance of servile absurdity, to be exceeded only by Joshua Barnes's dedication of a Greek Anacreon to the Duke.

His reputation had been somewhat advanced by *The Tender Husband*, a comedy which Steele dedicated to him, with a confession that he owed to him several of the most successful scenes. To this play Addison supplied a prologue.

When the marquis of Wharton was appointed lord lieutenant of Ireland, Addison attended him as his secretary ; and was made keeper of the records in Birmingham's Tower, with a salary of three hundred pounds a year. The office was little more than nominal, and the salary was augmented for his accommodation.

Interest and faction allow little to the operation of particular dispositions, or private opinions. Two men of personal characters more opposite than those of Wharton and Ad-

dison, could not easily be brought together. Wharton was impious, profligate, and shameless, without regard, or appearance of regard, to right and wrong : whatever is contrary to this, may be said of Addison ; but as agents of a party they were connected, and how they adjusted their other sentiments we cannot know.

Addison must however not be too hastily condemned. It is not necessary to refuse benefits from a bad man, when the acceptance implies no approbation of his crimes ; nor has the subordinate officer any obligation to examine the opinions or conduct of those under whom he acts, except that he may not be made the instrument of wickedness. It is reasonable to suppose that Addison counteracted, as far as he was able, the malignant and blasting influence of the Lieutenant, and that at least by his intervention some good was done, and some mischief prevented.

When he was in office, he made a law to himself, as Swift has recorded, never to remit his regular fees in civility to his friends : “ For,” said he, “ I may have a hundred
“ friends ;

“ friends; and, if my fee be two guineas, I
 “ shall, by relinquishing my right, lose two
 “ hundred guineas, and no friend gain more
 “ than two; there is therefore no proportion
 “ between the good imparted and the evil
 “ suffered.”

He was in Ireland when Steele, without any communication of his design, began the publication of the *Tatler*; but he was not long concealed: by inserting a remark on Virgil, which Addison had given him, he discovered himself. It is indeed not easy for any man to write upon literature, or common life, so as not to make himself known to those with whom he familiarly converses, and who are acquainted with his track of study, his favourite topics, his peculiar notions, and his habitual phrases.

If Steele desired to write in secret, he was not lucky; a single month detected him. His first *Tatler* was published April 22 (1709), and Addison's contribution appeared May 26. Tickell observes, that the *Tatler* began and was concluded without his concurrence. This is doubtless literally true;

but the work did not suffer much by his unconsciousness of its commencement, or his absence at its cessation; for he continued his assistance to December 23, and the paper stopped on January 2. He did not distinguish his pieces by any signature; and I know not whether his name was not kept secret, till the papers were collected into volumes.

To the *Tatler*, in about two months, succeeded the *Spectator*; a series of essays of the same kind, but written with less levity, upon a more regular plan, and published daily. Such an undertaking shewed the writers not to distrust their own copiousness of materials or facility of composition, and their performance justified their confidence. They found, however, in their progress, many auxiliaries. To attempt a single paper was no terrifying labour: many pieces were offered, and many were received.

Addison had enough of the zeal of party, but Steele had at that time almost nothing else. The *Spectator*, in one of the first papers, shewed the political tenets of its authors; but

but a resolution was soon taken, of courting general approbation by general topicks, and subjects on which faction had produced no diversity of sentiments ; such as literature, morality, and familiar life. To this practice they adhered with very few deviations. The ardour of Steele once broke out in praise of Marlborough ; and when Dr. Fleetwood prefixed to some sermons a preface, overflowing with whiggish opinions, that it might be read by the Queen, it was reprinted in the Spectator.

To teach the minuter decencies and inferior duties, to regulate the practice of daily conversation, to correct those depravities which are rather ridiculous than criminal, and remove those grievances which, if they produce no lasting calamities, impress hourly vexation, was first attempted in Italy by *Casa* in his book of *Manners*, and *Castiglione* in his *Courtier* ; two books yet celebrated in Italy for purity and elegance, and which, if they are now less read, are neglected only because they have effected that reformation which their authors intended, and their precepts now are no longer wanted. Their usefulness to the age in which they were written,

ten, is sufficiently attested by the translations which almost all the nations of Europe were in haste to obtain.

This species of instruction was continued, and perhaps advanced, by the French ; among whom *La Bruyere's* Manners of the Age, though, as Boileau remarked, it is written without connection, certainly deserves great praise, for liveliness of description and justness of observation.

Before the *Tatler* and *Spectator*, if the writers for the theatre are excepted, England had no masters of common life. No writers had yet undertaken to reform either the savageness of neglect, or the impertinence of civility ; to teach when to speak, or to be silent ; how to refuse, or how to comply. We wanted not books to teach us our more important duties, and to settle opinions in philosophy or politicks ; but an *Arbiter elegantiarum*, a judge of propriety, was yet wanting, who should survey the track of daily conversation, and free it from thorns and prickles, which tease the passer, though they do not wound him.

For

For this purpose nothing is so proper as the frequent publication of short papers, which we read not as study but amusement. If the subject be slight, the treatise likewise is short. The busy may find time, and the idle may find patience.

This mode of conveying cheap and easy knowledge began among us in the Civil War, when it was much the interest of either party to raise and fix the prejudices of the people. At that time appeared *Mercurius Aulicus*, *Mercurius Rusticus*, and *Mercurius Civicus*. It is said, that when any title grew popular, it was stolen by the antagonist, who by this stratagem conveyed his notions to those who would not have received him had he not worn the appearance of a friend. The tumult of those unhappy days left scarcely any man leisure to treasure up occasional compositions; and so much were they neglected, that a complete collection is no where to be found.

These Mercuries were succeeded by *L'Estrange's Observator*, and that by *Lesley's Rehearſal*,

hearsal, and perhaps by others ; but hitherto nothing had been conveyed to the people, in this commodious manner, but controversy relating to the Church or State ; of which they taught many to talk, whom they could not teach to judge.

It has been suggested that the Royal Society was instituted soon after the Restoration, to divert the attention of the people from publick discontent. The Tatler and Spectator had the same tendency : they were published at a time when two parties, loud, restless, and violent, each with plausible declarations, and each perhaps without any distinct termination of its views, were agitating the nation ; to minds heated with political contest, they supplied cooler and more inoffensive reflections ; and it is said by Addison, in a subsequent work, that they had a perceptible influence upon the conversation of that time, and taught the frolick and the gay to unite merriment with decency ; an effect which they can never wholly lose, while they continue to be among the first books by which both sexes are initiated in the elegancies of knowledge.

The

The Tatler and Spectator reduced, like *Casa*, the unsettled practice of daily intercourse to propriety and politeness; and, like *La Bruyere*, exhibited the *Characters and Manners of the Age*. The personages introduced in these papers were not merely ideal; they were then known, and conspicuous in various stations. Of the Tatler this is told by Steele in his last paper, and of the Spectator by Budgell in the Preface to *Theophrastus*; a book which Addison has recommended, and which he was suspected to have revised, if he did not write it. Of those portraits, which may be supposed to be sometimes embellished, and sometimes aggravated, the originals are partly known, and partly forgotten.

But to say that they united the plans of two or three eminent writers, is to give them but a small part of their due praise; they superadded literature and criticism, and sometimes towered far above their predecessors; and taught, with great justness of argument and dignity of language, the most important duties and sublime truths.

All

All these topicks were happily varied with elegant fictions and refined allegories, and illuminated with different changes of style and felicities of invention.

It is recorded by Budgell, that of the characters feigned or exhibited in the Spectator, the favourite of Addison was Sir Roger de Coverley, of whom he had formed a very delicate and discriminated idea, which he would not suffer to be violated; and therefore when Steele had shewn him innocently picking up a girl in the Temple, and taking her to a tavern, he drew upon himself so much of his friend's indignation, that he was forced to appease him by a promise of forbearing Sir Roger for the time to come.

The reason which induced Cervantes to bring his hero to the grave, *para mi sola nacio Don Quixote, y yo para el*, made Addison declare, with an undue vehemence of expression, that he would kill Sir Roger; being of opinion that they were born for one another, and that any other hand would do him wrong.

It

It may be doubted whether Addison ever filled up his original delineation. He describes his Knight as having his imagination somewhat warped ; but of this perversion he has made very little use. The irregularities in Sir Roger's conduct, seem not so much the effects of a mind deviating from the beaten track of life, by the perpetual pressure of some overwhelming idea, as of habitual rusticity, and that negligence which solitary grandeur naturally generates.

The variable weather of the mind, the flying vapours of incipient madness, which from time to time cloud reason, without eclipsing it, it requires so much nicety to exhibit, that Addison seems to have been deterred from prosecuting his own design.

To Sir Roger, who, as a country gentleman, appears to be a Tory, or, as it is gently expressed, an adherent to the landed interest, is opposed Sir Andrew Freeport, a new man, a wealthy merchant, zealous for the moneyed interest, and a Whig. Of this contrariety of opinions, it is probable more consequences
were

were at first intended, than could be produced when the resolution was taken to exclude party from the paper. Sir Andrew does but little, and that little seems not to have pleased Addison, who, when he dismissed him from the club, changed his opinions. Steele had made him, in the true spirit of unfeeling commerce, declare that he *would not build an hospital for idle people*; but at last he buys land, settles in the country, and builds not a manufactory, but an hospital for twelve old husbandmen, for men with whom a merchant has little acquaintance, and whom he commonly considers with little kindness.

Of essays thus elegant, thus instructive, and thus commodiously distributed, it is natural to suppose the approbation general and the sale numerous. I once heard it observed, that the sale may be calculated by the product of the tax, related in the last number to produce more than twenty pounds a week, and therefore stated at one and twenty pounds, or three pounds ten shillings a day: this, at a half-penny a paper, will give sixteen hundred and eighty for the daily number.

This sale is not great; yet this, if Swift be credited, was likely to grow less; for he declares that the Spectator, whom he ridicules for his endless mention of the *fair sex*, had before his recess wearied his readers.

The next year (1713), in which Cato came upon the stage, was the grand climacterick of Addison's reputation. Upon the death of Cato, he had, as is said, planned a tragedy in the time of his travels, and had for several years the four first acts finished, which were shewn to such as were likely to spread their admiration. They were seen by Pope, and by Cibber; who relates that Steele, when he took back the copy, told him, in the despicable cant of literary modesty, that, whatever spirit his friend had shewn in the composition, he doubted whether he would have courage sufficient to expose it to the censure of a British audience.

The time however was now come, when those who affected to think liberty in danger, affected likewise to think that a stage-play might preserve it: and Addison was im-
 VOL. II. B b portuned,

portuned, in the name of the tutelary deities of Britain, to shew his courage and his zeal by finishing his design.

To resume his work he seemed perversely and unaccountably unwilling; and by a request, which perhaps he wished to be denied, desired Mr. Hughes to add a fifth act. Hughes supposed him serious; and, undertaking the supplement, brought in a few days some scenes for his examination; but he had in the mean time gone to work himself, and produced half an act, which he afterwards completed, but with brevity irregularly disproportionate to the foregoing parts; like a task performed with reluctance, and hurried to its conclusion.

It may yet be doubted whether Cato was made publick by any change of the author's purpose; for Dennis charged him with raising prejudices in his own favour by false positions of preparatory criticism, and with *poisoning the town* by contradicting in the Spectator the established rule of poetical justice, because his own hero, with all his virtues, was to fall before a tyrant. The fact is certain; the motives we must guess.

Addison

Addison was, I believe, sufficiently disposed to bar all avenues against all danger. When Pope brought him the prologue, which is properly accommodated to the play, there were these words, *Britons, arise, be worth like this approved*; meaning nothing more than, Britons erect and exalt yourselves to the approbation of publick virtue. Addison was frightened lest he should be thought a promoter of insurrection, and the line was liquidated to *Britons, attend*.

Now, *heavily in clouds came on the day, the great, the important day*, when Addison was to stand the hazard of the theatre. That there might, however, be left as little to hazard as was possible, on the first night Steele, as himself relates, undertook to pack an audience. This, says Pope *, had been tried for the first time in favour of the Distrest Mother; and was now, with more efficacy, practised for Cato.

The danger was soon over. The whole nation was at that time on fire with faction.

* Spence.

The Whigs applauded every line in which Liberty was mentioned, as a satire on the Tories; and the Tories echoed every clap, to shew that the satire was unfelt. The story of Bolingbroke is well known. He called Booth to his box, and gave him fifty guineas for defending the cause of Liberty so well against a perpetual dictator. The Whigs, says Pope, design a second present, when they can accompany it with as good a sentence.

The play, supported thus by the emulation of factious praise, was acted night after night for a longer time than, I believe, the publick had allowed to any drama before; and the author, as Mrs. Porter related, wandered through the whole exhibition behind the scenes with restless and unappeasable solicitude.

When it was printed, notice was given that the Queen would be pleased if it was dedicated to her; *but as he had designed that compliment elsewhere, he found himself obliged, says Tickell, by his duty on the one hand, and*
his

his honour on the other, to send it into the world without any dedication.

Human happiness has always its abatements; the brightest sun-shine of success is not without a cloud. No sooner was Cato offered to the reader, than it was attacked by the acute malignity of Dennis, with all the violence of angry criticism. Dennis, though equally zealous, and probably by his temper more furious than Addison, for what they called liberty, and though a flatterer of the Whig ministry, could not sit quiet at a successful play; but was eager to tell friends and enemies, that they had misplaced their admirations. The world was too stubborn for instruction; with the fate of the censurer of Corneille's Cid, his animadversions shewed his anger without effect, and Cato continued to be praised.

Pope had now an opportunity of courting the friendship of Addison, by vilifying his old enemy, and could give resentment its full play without appearing to revenge himself. He therefore published *A Narrative of the madness of John Dennis*; a performance

which left the objections to the play in their full force, and therefore discovered more desire of vexing the critick than of defending the poet.

Addison who was no stranger to the world, probably saw the selfishness of Pope's friendship; and, resolving that he should have the consequences of his officiousness to himself, informed Dennis by Steele, that he was sorry for the insult; and that whenever he should think fit to answer his remarks, he would do it in a manner to which nothing could be objected,

The greatest weakness of the play is in the scenes of love, which are said by Pope* to have been added to the original plan upon a subsequent review, in compliance with the popular practice of the stage. Such an authority it is hard to reject; yet the love is so intimately mingled with the whole action, that it cannot easily be thought extrinsick and adventitious; for if it were taken away, what would be left? or how were the four acts filled in the first draught?

* Spence.

At the publication the Wits seemed proud to pay their attendance with encomiastick verses. The best are from an unknown hand, which will perhaps lose somewhat of their praise when the author is known to be Jeffreys.

Cato had yet other honours. It was censured as a party-play by a *Scholar of Oxford*, and defended in a favourable examination by Dr. Sewel. It was translated by Salvini into Italian, and acted at Florence; and by the Jesuits of St. Omer's into Latin, and played by their pupils. Of this version a copy was sent to Mr. Addison: it is to be wished that it could be found, for the sake of comparing their version of the soliloquy with that of Bland.

A tragedy was written on the same subject by Des Champs, a French poet, which was translated, with a criticism on the English play. But the translator and the critic are now forgotten.

Dennis lived on unanswered, and therefore little read: Addison knew the policy of lite-

rature too well to make his enemy important, by drawing the attention of the publick upon a criticism, which, though sometimes intemperate, was often irrefragable.

While Cato was upon the stage, another daily paper, called *The Guardian*, was published by Steele. To this, Addison gave great assistance, whether occasionally or by previous engagement is not known.

The character of *Guardian* was too narrow and too serious : it might properly enough admit both the duties and the decencies of life, but seemed not to include literary speculations, and was in some degree violated by merriment and burlesque. What had the *Guardian* of the Lizards to do with clubs of tall or of little men, with nests of ants, or with Strada's prolusions ?

Of this paper nothing is necessary to be said, but that it found many contributors, and that it was a continuation of the *Spectator*, with the same elegance, and the same variety, till some unlucky sparkle from a Tory paper set Steele's politicks on fire, and
wit

wit at once blazed into faction. He was soon too hot for neutral topicks, and quitted the *Guardian* to write the *Englishman*.

The papers of Addison are marked in the *Spectator* by one of the Letters in the name of *Clio*, and in the *Guardian* by *a hand*; whether it was, as Tickell pretends to think, that he was unwilling to usurp the praise of others, or as Steele, with far greater likelihood, insinuates, that he could not without discontent impart to others any of his own. I have heard that his avidity did not satisfy itself with the air of renown, but that with great eagerness he laid hold on his proportion of the profits.

Many of these papers were written with powers truly comick, with nice discrimination of characters, and accurate observation of natural or accidental deviations from propriety; but it was not supposed that he had tried a comedy on the stage, till Steele, after his death, declared him the author of the *Drummer*; this however he did not know to be true by any cogent testimony; for when Addison put the play into his hands, he only told him it was the work of a *Gentleman in*

the Company; and when it was received, as is confessed, with cold disapprobation, he was probably less willing to claim it. Tickell omitted it in his collection; but the testimony of Steele, and the total silence of any other claimant, has determined the publick to assign it to Addison, and it is now printed with his other poetry. Steele carried the *Drummer* to the playhouse, and afterwards to the press, and sold the copy for fifty guineas.

To the opinion of Steele may be added the proof supplied by the play itself, of which the characters are such as Addison would have delineated, and the tendency such as Addison would have promoted. That it should have been ill received would raise wonder, did we not daily see the capricious distribution of theatrical praise.

He was not all this time an indifferent spectator of publick affairs. He wrote, as different exigencies required (in 1707), *The present State of the War, and the Necessity of an Augmentation*; which, however judicious, being written on temporary topicks, and exhibiting no peculiar powers, has naturally
funk

sunk by its own weight into neglect. This cannot be said of the few papers entitled *The Whig Examiner*, in which is exhibited all the force of gay malevolence and humorous satire. Of this paper, which just appeared and expired, Swift remarks, with exultation, that *it is now down among the dead men*. He might well rejoice at the death of that which he could not have killed. Every reader of every party, since personal malice is past, and the papers which once inflamed the nation are read only as effusions of wit, must wish for more of the *Whig Examiners*; for on no occasion was the genius of Addison more vigorously exerted, and on none did the superiority of his wit more evidently appear. His *Trial of Count Tariff*, written to expose the Treaty of Commerce with France, lived no longer than the question that produced it.

Not long afterwards an attempt was made to revive the *Spectator*, at a time indeed by no means favourable to literature, when the succession of a new family to the throne filled the nation with anxiety, discord, and confusion; and either the turbulence of the times, or the satiety of the readers, put a stop
to

to the publication, after an experiment of eighty numbers, which were afterwards collected into an eighth volume, perhaps more valuable than any one of those that went before it: Addison produced more than a fourth part, and the other contributors are by no means unworthy of appearing as his associates. The time that had passed during the suspension of the *Spectator*, though it had not lessened his power of humour, seems to have increased his disposition to seriousness: the proportion of his religious to his comick papers is greater than in the former series.

The *Spectator*, from its recommencement, was published only three times a week; and no discriminative marks were added to the papers. To Addison Tickell has ascribed twenty-three*.

The *Spectator* had many contributors; and Steele, whose negligence kept him always in a hurry, when it was his turn to furnish a paper, called loudly for the Letters, of which

* Numb. 556. 557. 558. 559. 561. 562. 565. 567. 568. 569. 571. 574. 575. 579. 580. 582. 583. 584. 585. 590. 592. 598. 600.

Addison,

Addison, whose materials were more, made little use ; having recourse to sketches and hints, the product of his former studies, which he now reviewed and completed : among these are named by Tickell the *Essays on Wit*, those on the *Pleasures of the Imagination*, and the *Criticisms on Milton*.

When the House of Hanover took possession of the throne, it was reasonable to expect that the zeal of Addison would be suitably rewarded. Before the arrival of king George, he was made secretary to the regency, and was required by his office to send notice to Hanover that the Queen was dead, and that the throne was vacant. To do this would not have been difficult to any man but Addison, who was so overwhelmed with the greatness of the event, and so distracted by choice of expression, that the lords, who could not wait for the niceties of criticism, called Mr. Southwell, a clerk in the house, and ordered him to dispatch the message. Southwell readily told what was necessary, in the common style of business, and valued himself upon having done what was too hard for Addison.

He

He was better qualified for the *Freeholder*, a paper which he published twice a week, from Dec. 23, 1715, to the middle of the next year. This was undertaken in defence of the established government, sometimes with argument, sometimes with mirth. In argument he had many equals; but his humour was singular and matchless. Bigotry itself must be delighted with the Tory-Fox-hunter.

There are however some strokes less elegant, and less decent; such as the Pretender's Journal, in which one topick of ridicule is his poverty. This mode of abuse had been employed by Milton against king Charles II.

— — — Jacobæi.

Centum exulantis viscera Marsupii regis.

And Oldmixon delights to tell of some alderman of London, that he had more money than the exiled princes; but that which might be expected from Milton's savageness, or Oldmixon's meanness, was not suitable to the delicacy of Addison.

Steele thought the humour of the *Freeholder* too nice and gentle for such noisy times;

times; and is reported to have said that the ministry made use of a lute, when they should have called for a trumpet.

This year * he married the countess dowager of Warwick, whom he had solicited by a very long and anxious courtship, perhaps with behaviour not very unlike that of Sir Roger to his disdainful widow; and who, I am afraid, diverted herself often by playing with his passion. He is said to have first known her by becoming tutor to her son †, “He formed,” said Tonson, “the design of getting that lady, from the time when he was first recommended into the family.” In what part of his life he obtained the recommendation, or how long, and in what manner he lived in the family, I know not. His advances at first were certainly timorous, but grew bolder as his reputation and influence increased; till at last the lady was persuaded to marry him, on terms much like those on which a Turkish princess is espoused, to whom the Sultan is reported to pronounce, “Daughter, I give thee this man for thy

* August 2, 1716.

† Spence.

“slave.”

“ slave.” The marriage, if uncontradicted report can be credited, made no addition to his happiness ; it neither found them nor made them equal. She always remembered her own rank, and thought herself entitled to treat with very little ceremony the tutor of her son. Rowe’s ballad of the *Despairing Shepherd* is said to have been written, either before or after marriage, upon this memorable pair ; and it is certain that Addison has left behind him no encouragement for ambitious love.

The year after (1717) he rose to his highest elevation, being made secretary of state. For this employment he might be justly supposed qualified by long practice of business, and by his regular ascent through other offices ; but expectation is often disappointed ; it is universally confessed that he was unequal to the duties of his place. In the house of commons he could not speak, and therefore was useless to the defence of the government. In the office, says Pope *, he could not issue an order without losing his time in quest of fine expressions. What he gained

* Spence.

in rank, he lost in credit; and, finding by experience his own inability, was forced to solicit his dismissal, with a pension of fifteen hundred pounds a year. His friends palliated this relinquishment, of which both friends and enemies knew the true reason, with an account of declining health, and the necessity of recess and quiet.

He now returned to his vocation, and began to plan literary occupations for his future life. He purposed a tragedy on the death of Socrates; a story of which, as Tickell remarks, the basis is narrow, and to which I know not how love could have been appended. There would however have been no want either of virtue in the sentiments, or elegance in the language.

He engaged in a nobler work, a defence of the *Christian Religion*, of which part was published after his death; and he designed to have made a new poetical version of the Psalms.

These pious compositions Pope imputed * to a selfish motive, upon the credit, as he

* Spence.

owns, of Tonson; who having quarrelled with Addison, and not loving him, said, that, when he laid down the secretary's office, he intended to take orders, and obtain a bishoprick; *for, said he, I always thought him a priest in his heart.*

That Pope should have thought this conjecture of Tonson worth remembrance is a proof, but indeed so far as I have found, the only proof, that he retained some malignity from their ancient rivalry. Tonson pretended but to guess it; no other mortal ever suspected it; and Pope might have reflected, that a man who had been secretary of state, in the ministry of Sunderland, knew a nearer way to a bishoprick than by defending Religion, or translating the Psalms.

It is related that he had once a design to make an English Dictionary, and that he considered Dr. Tillotson as the writer of highest authority. There was formerly sent to me by Mr. Locker, clerk of the Leatherfellers Company, who was eminent for curiosity and literature, a collection of examples selected from Tillotson's works, as Locker said, by Addison. It came too late to be of use, so I inspected it but slightly, and remember

it indistinctly. I thought the passages too short.

Addison however did not conclude his life in peaceful studies ; but relapsed, when he was near his end, to a political question.

It so happened that (1718-19) a controversy was agitated, with great vehemence, between those friends of long continuance, Addison and Steele. It may be asked, in the language of Homer, what power or what cause could set them at variance. The subject of their dispute was of great importance. The earl of Sunderland proposed an act called the *Peerage Bill*, by which the number of peers should be fixed, and the king restrained from any new creation of nobility, unless when an old family should be extinct. To this the lords would naturally agree ; and the king, who was yet little acquainted with his own prerogative, and, as is now well known, almost indifferent to the possessions of the Crown, had been persuaded to consent. The only difficulty was found among the commons, who were not likely to approve the perpetual exclusion of themselves

and their posterity. The bill therefore was eagerly opposed, and among others by Sir Robert Walpole, whose speech was published.

The lords might think their dignity diminished by improper advancements, and particularly by the introduction of twelve new peers at once, to produce a majority of Tories in the last reign; an act of authority violent enough, yet certainly legal, and by no means to be compared with that contempt of national right, with which some time afterwards, by the instigation of Whiggism, the commons, chosen by the people for three years, chose themselves for seven. But, whatever might be the disposition of the lords, the people had no wish to increase their power. The tendency of the bill, as Steele observed in a letter to the earl of Oxford, was to introduce an Aristocracy; for a majority in the house of lords, so limited, would have been despotick and irresistible.

To prevent this subversion of the ancient establishment, Steele, whose pen readily seconded his political passions, endeavoured to alarm the nation by a pamphlet called *The Plebeian*;

Plebeian; to this an answer was published by Addison, under the title of *The Old Whig*, in which it is not discovered that Steele was then known to be the advocate for the commons. Steele replied by a second *Plebeian*; and, whether by ignorance or by courtesy, confined himself to his question, without any personal notice of his opponent. Nothing hitherto was committed against the laws of friendship, or proprieties of decency; but controvertists cannot long retain their kindness for each other. *The Old Whig* answered the *Plebeian*, and could not forbear some contempt of 'little *Dicky*, whose trade it was to write pamphlets.' *Dicky* however did not lose his settled veneration for his friend; but contented himself with quoting some lines of Cato, which were at once detection and reproof. The bill was laid aside during that session, and Addison died before the next, in which its commitment was rejected by two hundred sixty-five to one hundred seventy-seven.

Every reader surely must regret that these two illustrious friends, after so many years past in confidence and endearment, in unity

of interest, conformity of opinion, and fellowship of study, should finally part in acrimonious opposition. Such a controversy was *Bellum plusquam civile*, as Lucan expresses it. Why could not faction find other advocates? But, among the uncertainties of the human state, we are doomed to number the instability of friendship.

Of this dispute I have little knowledge but from the *Biographia Britannica*. The *Old Whig* is not inserted in Addison's works, nor is it mentioned by Tickell in his Life; why it was omitted the biographers doubtless give the true reason; the fact was too recent, and those who had been heated in the contention were not yet cool.

The necessity of complying with times, and of sparing persons, is the great impediment of biography. History may be formed from permanent monuments and records; but Lives can only be written from personal knowledge, which is growing every day less, and in a short time is lost for ever. What is known can seldom be immediately told; and when it might be told, it is no longer known.

The

The delicate features of the mind, the nice discriminations of character, and the minute peculiarities of conduct, are soon obliterated; and it is surely better that caprice, obstinacy, frolick, and folly, however they might delight in the description, should be silently forgotten, than that, by wanton merriment and unseasonable detection, a pang should be given to a widow, a daughter, a brother, or a friend. As the process of these narratives is now bringing me among my contemporaries, I begin to feel myself *walking upon ashes under which the fire is not extinguished*, and coming to the time of which it will be proper rather to say *nothing that is false, than all that is true.*

The end of this useful life was now approaching.—Addison had for some time been oppressed by shortness of breath, which was now aggravated by a dropsy; and, finding his danger pressing, he prepared to die conformably to his own precepts and professions.

During this lingering decay, he sent, as Pope relates *, a message by the earl of War-

* Spence.

wick to Mr. Gay, desiring to see him : Gay, who had not visited him for some time before, obeyed the summons, and found himself received with great kindness. The purpose for which the interview had been solicited was then discovered : Addison told him, that he had injured him ; but that, if he recovered, he would recompense him. What the injury was he did not explain, nor did Gay ever know ; but supposed that some preferment designed for him, had, by Addison's intervention, been withheld.

Lord Warwick was a young man of very irregular life, and perhaps of loose opinions. Addison, for whom he did not want respect, had very diligently endeavoured to reclaim him ; but his arguments and expostulations had no effect. One experiment, however, remained to be tried : when he found his life near its end, he directed the young lord to be called ; and when he desired, with great tenderness, to hear his last injunctions, told him, *I have sent for you that you may see how a Christian can die.* What effect this awful scene had on the earl I know not ; he died himself in a short time.

In Tickell's excellent Elegy on his friend are these lines :

He taught us how to live ; and, oh ! too high
The price of knowledge, taught us how to die.

In which he alludes to this moving interview, as he told Dr. Young, to whom he related it.

Having given directions to Mr. Tickell for the publication of his works, and dedicated them on his death-bed to his friend Mr. Craggs, he died June 17, 1719, at Holland-house, leaving no child but a daughter.

Of his virtue it is a sufficient testimony, that the resentment of party has transmitted no charge of any crime. He was not one of those who are praised only after death ; for his merit was so generally acknowledged, that Swift, having observed that his election passed without a contest, adds, that if he had proposed himself for king, he would hardly have been refused.

His

His zeal for his party did not extinguish his kindness for the merit of his opponents : when he was secretary in Ireland, he refused to intermit his acquaintance with Swift.

Of his habits, or external manners, nothing is so often mentioned as that timorous or sullen taciturnity, which his friends called modesty by too mild a name. Steele mentions, with great tenderness, “ that remarkable bashfulness, which is a cloak that hides and muffles merit ;” and tells us, that “ his abilities were covered only by modesty, which doubles the beauties which are seen, and gives credit and esteem to all that are concealed.” Chesterfield affirms, that “ Addison was the most timorous and awkward man that he ever saw.” And Addison, speaking of his own deficiency in conversation, used to say of himself, that, with respect to intellectual wealth, “ he could draw bills for a thousand pounds, though he [had not a guinea in his pocket.”

That he wanted current coin for ready payment, and by that want was often obstructed

structed and distressed ; that he was oppressed by an improper and ungraceful timidity, every testimony concurs to prove ; but Chesterfield's representation is doubtless hyperbolic. That man cannot be supposed very unexpert in the arts of conversation and practice of life, who, without fortune or alliance, by his usefulness and dexterity, became secretary of state ; and who died at forty-seven, after having not only stood long in the highest rank of wit and literature, but filled one of the most important offices of state.

The time in which he lived, had reason to lament his obstinacy of silence ; “ for he “ was,” says Steele, “ above all men in “ that talent called humour, and enjoyed “ it in such perfection, that I have often re- “ flected, after a night spent with him “ apart from all the world, that I had had “ the pleasure of conversing with an inti- “ mate acquaintance of Terence and Catul- “ lus, who had all their wit and nature, “ heightened with humour more exquisite “ and delightful than any other man ever “ possessed.” This is the fondness of a friend ; let us hear what is told us by a rival.

Addison's

“Addison’s conversation*,” says Pope, “had something in it more charming than I have found in any other man. But this was only when familiar : before strangers, or perhaps a single stranger, he preserved his dignity by a stiff silence.”

This modesty was by no means inconsistent with a very high opinion of his own merit. He demanded to be the first name in modern wit ; and, with Steele to echo him, used to depreciate Dryden, whom Pope and Congreve defended against them†. There is no reason to doubt that he suffered too much pain from the prevalence of Pope’s poetical reputation ; nor is it without strong reason suspected, that by some disingenuous acts he endeavoured to obstruct it ; Pope was not the only man whom he insidiously injured, though the only man of whom he could be afraid.

His own powers were such as might have satisfied him with conscious excellence. Of very extensive learning he has indeed given

* Spence.

† Tonson and Spence.

no proofs. He seems to have had small acquaintance with the sciences, and to have read little except Latin and French; but of the Latin poets his *Dialogues on Medals* shew that he had perused the works with great diligence and skill. The abundance of his own mind left him little need of adventitious sentiments; his wit always could suggest what the occasion demanded. He had read with critical eyes the important volume of human life, and knew the heart of man from the depths of stratagem to the surface of affectation.

What he knew he could easily communicate. "This," says Steele, "was particular in this writer, that, when he had taken his resolution, or made his plan for what he designed to write, he would walk about a room, and dictate it into language with as much freedom and ease as any one could write it down, and attend to the coherence and grammar of what he dictated."

Pope*, who can be less suspected of favouring his memory, declares that he wrote

* Spence.

very fluently, but was slow and scrupulous in correcting; that many of his Spectators were written very fast, and sent immediately to the press; and that it seemed to be for his advantage not to have time for much revision.

“He would alter,” says Pope, “any thing to please his friends, before publication; but would not retouch his pieces afterwards: and I believe not one word in Cato, to which I made an objection, was suffered to stand.”

The last line of Cato is Pope's, having been originally written

And, oh! 'twas this that ended Cato's life.

Pope might have made more objections to the six concluding lines. In the first couplet the words *from hence* are improper; and the second line is taken from Dryden's Virgil. Of the next couplet, the first verse being included in the second, is therefore useless; and in the third *Discord* is made to produce *Strife*.

Of

Of the course of Addison's familiar day*, before his marriage, Pope has given a detail. He had in the house with him Budgell, and perhaps Philips. His chief companions were Steele, Budgell, Philips, Carey, Davenant, and colonel Brett. With one or other of these he always breakfasted. He studied all morning; then dined at a tavern, and went afterwards to Button's.

Button had been a servant in the countess of Warwick's family, who, under the patronage of Addison, kept a coffee-house on the south-side of Russel-street, about two doors from Covent-garden. Here it was that the wits of that time used to assemble. It is said, that when Addison had suffered any vexation from the countess, he withdrew the company from Button's house.

From the coffee-house he went again to a tavern, where he often sat late, and drank too much wine. In the bottle, discontent seeks for comfort, cowardice for courage, and bashfulness for confidence. It is not

* Spence.

unlikely that Addison was first seduced to excess by the manumission which he obtained from the servile timidity of his sober hours. He that feels oppression from the presence of those to whom he knows himself superior, will desire to set loose his powers of conversation ; and who, that ever asked succour from Bacchus, was able to preserve himself from being enslaved by his auxiliary ?

Among those friends it was that Addison displayed the elegance of his colloquial accomplishments, which may easily be supposed such as Pope represents them. The remark of Mandeville, who, when he had passed an evening in his company, declared that he was a parson in a tye-wig, can detract little from his character ; he was always reserved to strangers, and was not incited to uncommon freedom by a character like that of Mandeville.

From any minute knowledge of his familiar manners, the intervention of sixty years has now debarred us. Steele once promised Congreve and the publick a complete description of his character ; but the promises
of

of authors are like the vows of lovers. Steele thought no more on his design; or thought on it with anxiety that at last disgusted him, and left his friend in the hands of Tickell.

His works will supply some information. It appears from his various pictures of the world, that, with all his bashfulness, he had conversed with many distinct classes of men, had surveyed their ways with very diligent observation, and marked with great acuteness the effects of different modes of life. He was a man in whose presence nothing reprehensible was out of danger; quick in discerning whatever was wrong or ridiculous, and not unwilling to expose it. *There are, says Steele, in his writings many oblique strokes upon some of the wittiest men of the age* His delight was more to excite merriment than detestation, and he detects follies rather than crimes.

If any judgement be made, from his books, of his moral character, nothing will be found but purity and excellence. Knowledge of mankind indeed, less extensive than that of Addison, will shew, that to write, and

to live, are very different. Many who praise virtue, do no more than praise it. Yet it is reasonable to believe that Addison's professions and practice were at no great variance, since, amidst that storm of faction in which most of his life was passed, though his station made him conspicuous, and his activity made him formidable, the character given him by his friends was never contradicted by his enemies: of those with whom interest or opinion united him, he had not only the esteem, but the kindness; and of others, whom the violence of opposition drove against him, though he might lose the love, he retained the reverence.

It is justly observed by Tickell, that he employed wit on the side of virtue and religion. He not only made the proper use of wit himself, but taught it to others; and from his time it has been generally subservient to the cause of reason and of truth. He has dissipated the prejudice that had long connected gaiety with vice, and easiness of manners with laxity of principles. He has restored virtue to its dignity, and taught innocence not to be ashamed. This is an elevation

vation of literary character, *above all Greek, above all Roman fame.* No greater felicity can genius attain than that of having purified intellectual pleasure, separated mirth from indecency, and wit from licentiousness; of having taught a succession of writers to bring elegance and gaiety to the aid of goodness; and, if I may use expressions yet more awful, of having *turned many to righteousness.*

ADDISON, in his life, and for some time afterwards, was considered by the greater part of readers as supremely excelling both in poetry and criticism. Part of his reputation may be probably ascribed to the advancement of his fortune: when, as Swift observes, he became a statesman, and saw poets waiting at his levee, it is no wonder that praise was accumulated upon him. Much likewise may be more honourably ascribed to his personal character: he who, if he had claimed it, might have obtained the diadem, was not likely to be denied the laurel.

But time quickly puts an end to artificial and accidental fame ; and Addison is to pass through futurity protected only by his genius. Every name which kindness or interest once raised too high, is in danger, lest the next age should, by the vengeance of criticism, sink it in the same proportion. A great writer has lately styled him *an indifferent poet, and a worse critick.*

His poetry is first to be considered ; of which it must be confessed that it has not often those felicities of diction which give lustre to sentiments, or that vigour of sentiment that animates diction : there is little of ardour, vehemence, or transport ; there is very rarely the awfulness of grandeur, and not very often the splendour of elegance. He thinks justly ; but he thinks faintly. This is his general character ; to which, doubtless, many single passages will furnish exceptions.

Yet, if he seldom reaches supreme excellence, he rarely sinks into dulness, and is still more rarely entangled in absurdity. He did not trust his powers enough to be negligent.

gent. There is in most of his compositions a calmness and equability, deliberate and cautious, sometimes with little that delights, but seldom with any thing that offends.

Of this kind seem to be his poems to Dryden, to Somers, and to the King. His ode on St. Cecilia has been imitated by Pope, and has something in it of Dryden's vigour. Of his Account of the English Poets, he used to speak as a *poor thing* *; but it is not worse than his usual strain. He has said, not very judiciously, in his character of Waller:

Thy verse could shew ev'n Cromwell's innocence,
And compliment the storms that bore him hence.
O! had thy Muse not come an age too soon,
But seen great Nassau on the British throne,
How had his triumph glitter'd in thy page!—

What is this but to say that he who could compliment Cromwell had been the proper poet for king William? Addison however never printed the piece.

The Letter from Italy has been always praised, but has never been praised beyond

* Spence.

its merit. It is more correct, with less appearance of labour, and more elegant, with less ambition of ornament, than any other of his poems. There is however one broken metaphor, of which notice may properly be taken:

Fit'd with that name—
I bridle, in my struggling Muse with pain,
That longs to launch into a nobler strain.

To *bridle* a *goddess* is no very delicate idea; but why must she be *bridled*? because she *longs to launch*; an act which was never hindered by a *bridle*: and whither will she *launch*? into a *nobler strain*. She is in the first line a *horse*, in the second a *boat*; and the care of the poet is to keep his *horse*, or his *boat*, from *singing*.

The next composition is the far-famed Campaign, which Dr. Warton has termed a *Gazette in Rhyme*, with harshness not often used by the good-nature of his criticism. Before a censure so severe is admitted, let us consider that War is a frequent subject of Poetry, and then enquire who has described it with more justness and force. Many of

our

our own writers tried their powers upon this year of victory, yet Addison's is confessedly the best performance; his poem is the work of a man not blinded by the dust of learning: his images are not borrowed merely from books. The superiority which he confers upon his hero is not personal prowess, and *mighty bone*, but deliberate intrepidity, a calm command of his passions, and the power of consulting his own mind in the midst of danger. The rejection and contempt of fiction is rational and manly.

It may be observed that the last line is imitated by Pope;

Marlb'rough's exploits appear divinely bright—
Rais'd of themselves, their genuine charms they
boast,

And those that paint them truest, praise them
most.

This Pope had in his thoughts; but, not knowing how to use what was not his own, he spoiled the thought when he had borrowed it:

The well-sung woes shall soothe my ghost;
He best can paint them who shall feel them
most.

Martial exploits may be *painted*; perhaps *woes* may be *painted*; but they are surely not *painted* by being *well-sung*: it is not easy to paint in song, or to sing in colours.

No passage in the Campaign has been more often mentioned than the simile of the Angel, which is said in the Tatler to be *one of the noblest thoughts that ever entered into the heart of man*, and is therefore worthy of attentive consideration. Let it be first enquired whether it be at last a simile. A poetical simile is the discovery of likeness between two actions, in their general nature dissimilar, or of causes terminating by different operations in some resemblance of effect. But the mention of another like consequence from a like cause, or of a like performance by a like agency, is not a simile, but an exemplification. It is not a simile to say that the Thames waters fields, as the Po waters fields; or that as Hecla vomits flames in Iceland, so *Ætna* vomits flames in Sicily. When Horace says of Pindar, that he pours his violence and rapidity of verse, as a river swollen with rain rushes from the mountain; or of himself, that his genius wanders in quest of
poetical

poetical decorations, as the bee wanders to collect honey ; he, in either case, produces a simile ; the mind is impressed with the resemblance of things generally unlike, as unlike as intellect and body. But if Pindar had been described as writing with the copiousness and grandeur of Homer, or Horace had told that he reviewed and finished his own poetry with the same care as Isocrates polished his orations, instead of similitude he would have exhibited almost identity ; he would have given the same portraits with different names. In this poem, when the English are represented as gaining a fortified pass, by repetition of attack and perseverance of resolution ; their obstinacy of courage, and vigour of onset, is well illustrated by the sea that breaks, with incessant battery, the dikes of Holland. This is a simile : but when Addison, having celebrated the beauty of Marlborough's person, tells us that *Achilles thus was formed with every grace*, here is no simile, but a mere exemplification. A simile may be compared to lines converging at a point, and is more excellent as the lines approach from greater distance : an exemplification may be considered as two parallel lines which
run

run on together without approximation, never far separated, and never joined.

Marlborough is so like the angel in the poem, that the action of both is almost the same, and performed by both in the same manner. Marlborough *teaches the battle to rage*; the angel *directs the storm*: Marlborough is *unmoved in peaceful thought*; the angel is *calm and serene*: Marlborough stands *unmoved amidst the shock of hosts*; the angel rides *calm in the whirlwind*. The lines on Marlborough are just and noble; but the simile gives almost the same images a second time.

But perhaps this thought, though hardly a simile, was remote from vulgar conceptions, and required great labour of research, or dexterity of application. Of this, Dr. Madden, a name which Ireland ought to honour, once gave me his opinion. *If I had set, said he, ten school-boys to write on the battle of Blenheim, and eight had brought me the Angel, I should not have been surprised.*

The opera of Rosamond, though it is seldom mentioned, is one of the first of Addison's

son's compositions. The subject is well-chosen, the fiction is pleasing, and the praise of Marlborough, for which the scene gives an opportunity, is, what perhaps every human excellence must be, the product of good-luck improved by genius. The thoughts are sometimes great, and sometimes tender; the versification is easy and gay. There is doubtless some advantage in the shortness of the lines, which there is little temptation to load with expletive epithets. The dialogue seems commonly better than the songs. The two comick characters of Sir Trusty and Griddle-line, though of no great value, are yet such as the poet intended. Sir Trusty's account of the death of Rosamond is, I think, too grossly absurd. The whole drama is airy and elegant; engaging in its process, and pleasing in its conclusion. If Addison had cultivated the lighter parts of poetry, he would probably have excelled.

The tragedy of Cato, which, contrary to the rule observed in selecting the works of other poets, has by the weight of its character forced its way into the late collection, is unquestionably the noblest production of Addison's

difon's genius. Of a work so much read, it is difficult to say any thing new. About things on which the publick thinks long, it commonly attains to think right; and of Cato it has been not unjustly determined, that it is rather a poem in dialogue than a drama, rather a succeſſion of juſt ſentiments in elegant language, than a representation of natural affections, or of any ſtate probable or poſſible in human life. Nothing here *excites or aſſwages emotion*; here is *no magical power of raiſing phantaſtick terror or wild anxiety*. The events are expected without ſolicitude, and are remembered without joy or ſorrow. Of the agents we have no care: we conſider not what they are doing, or what they are ſuffering; we wiſh only to know what they have to ſay. Cato is a being above our ſolicitude; a man of whom the gods take care, and whom we leave to their care with heedleſs confidence. To the reſt, neither gods nor men can have much attention; for there is not one amongſt them that ſtrongly attracts either affection or eſteem. But they are made the vehicles of ſuch ſentiments and ſuch expreſſion, that there is ſcarcely a ſcene in the play which the
reader

reader does not wish to impress upon his memory.

When Cato was shewn to Pope *, he advised the author to print it, without any theatrical exhibition; supposing that it would be read more favourably than heard. Addison declared himself of the same opinion; but urged the importunity of his friends for its appearance on the stage. The emulation of parties made it successful beyond expectation; and its success has introduced or confirmed among us the use of dialogue too declamatory, of unassuming elegance, and chill philosophy.

The universality of applause, however it might quell the censure of common mortals, had no other effect than to harden Dennis in fixed dislike; but his dislike was not merely capricious. He found and shewed many faults: he shewed them indeed with anger, but he found them with acuteness, such as ought to rescue his criticism from oblivion; though, at last, it will have no other life than it derives from the work which it endeavours to oppress.

* Sponcer.

Why he pays no regard to the opinion of the audience, he gives his reason, by remarking, that

“ A deference is to be paid to a general applause, when it appears that that applause is natural and spontaneous; but that little regard is to be had to it, when it is affected and artificial. Of all the tragedies which in his memory have had vast and violent runs, not one has been excellent, few have been tolerable, most have been scandalous. When a poet writes a tragedy, who knows he has judgement, and who feels he has genius, that poet presumes upon his own merit, and scorns to make a cabal. That people come coolly to the representation of such a tragedy, without any violent expectation, or delusive imagination, or invincible prepossession; that such an audience is liable to receive the impressions which the poem shall naturally make in them, and to judge by their own reason, and their own judgements, and that reason and judgement are calm and serene, not formed by nature to make proselytes, and to controul
“ and

“ and lord it over the imaginations of others.
 “ But that when an author writes a tragedy;
 “ who knows he has neither genius nor
 “ judgement, he has recourse to the making
 “ a party, and he endeavours to make up in
 “ industry what is wanting in talent, and to
 “ supply by poetical craft the absence of po-
 “ etical art: that such an author is humbly
 “ contented to raise men’s passions by a plot
 “ without doors, since he despairs of doing it
 “ by that which he brings upon the stage?
 “ That party and passion, and prepossession;
 “ are clamorous and tumultuous things, and
 “ so much the more clamorous and tumult-
 “ tuous by how much the more erroneous:
 “ that they domineer and tyrannize over the
 “ imaginations of persons who want judge-
 “ ment, and sometimes too of those who
 “ have it; and, like a fierce and outrageous
 “ torrent, bear down all opposition before
 “ them.”

He then condemns the neglect of poetical
 justice; which is always one of his favourite
 principles.

“ ’Tis certainly the duty of every tragick
 “ poet, by the exact distribution of poetical
 “ justice,

“ justice, to imitate the Divine Dispensation,
 “ and to inculcate a particular Providence.
 “ ’Tis true, indeed, upon the stage of the
 “ world, the wicked sometimes prosper, and
 “ the guiltless suffer. But that is permitted
 “ by the Governor of the world, to shew,
 “ from the attribute of his infinite justice,
 “ that there is a compensation in futurity, to
 “ prove the immortality of the human soul,
 “ and the certainty of future rewards and
 “ punishments. But the poetical persons in
 “ tragedy exist no longer than the reading, or
 “ the representation; the whole extent of
 “ their entity is circumscribed by those; and
 “ therefore, during that reading or represen-
 “ tation, according to their merits or deme-
 “ rits, they must be punished or rewarded.
 “ If this is not done, there is no impartial
 “ distribution of poetical justice, no instruc-
 “ tive lecture of a particular Providence, and
 “ no imitation of the Divine Dispensation.
 “ And yet the author of this tragedy does not
 “ only run counter to this, in the fate of his
 “ principal character; but every where,
 “ throughout it, makes virtue suffer, and vice
 “ triumph: for not only Cato is vanquished
 “ by Cæsar, but the treachery and perfidi-
 “ ousness

“dioufness of Syphax prevails over the honest simplicity and the credulity of Juba;
 “and the sly subtlety and dissimulation of Portius over the generous frankness and
 “open-heartedness of Marcus.”

Whatever pleasure there may be in seeing crimes punished and virtue rewarded, yet, since wickedness often prospers in real life, the poet is certainly at liberty to give it prosperity on the stage. For if poetry has an imitation of reality, how are its laws broken by exhibiting the world in its true form? The stage may sometimes gratify our wishes; but, if it be truly the *mirror of life*, it ought to shew us sometimes what we are to expect.

Dennis objects to the characters that they are not natural, or reasonable; but as heroes and heroines are not beings that are seen every day, it is hard to find upon what principles their conduct shall be tried. It is, however, not useless to consider what he says of the manner in which Cato receives the account of his son's death.

“Nor is the grief of Cato, in the fourth
 “act, one jot more in nature than that of his

“ son and Lucia in the third. Cato receives
“ the news of his son’s death not only with
“ dry eyes, but with a sort of satisfaction;
“ and in the same page sheds tears for the
“ calamity of his country, and does the same
“ thing in the next page upon the bare ap-
“ prehension of the danger of his friends.
“ Now, since the love of one’s country is the
“ love of one’s countrymen, as I have shewn
“ upon another occasion, I desire to ask these
“ questions: of all our countrymen, which
“ do we love most, those whom we know,
“ or those whom we know not? And of those
“ whom we know, which do we cherish
“ most, our friends or our enemies? And of
“ our friends, which are the dearest to us?
“ those who are related to us, or those who
“ are not? And of all our relations, for
“ which have we most tenderness, for those
“ who are near to us, or for those who are
“ remote? And of our near relations, which
“ are the nearest, and consequently the dearest
“ to us, our offspring or others? Our off-
“ spring, most certainly; as nature, or in
“ other words Providence, has wisely con-
“ trived for the preservation of mankind.
“ Now, does it not follow, from what has
“ been

“ been said, that for a man to receive the
 “ news of his son’s death with dry eyes, and
 “ to weep at the same time for the calamities
 “ of his country, is a wretched affectation,
 “ and a miserable inconsistency ? Is not that,
 “ in plain English, to receive with dry eyes
 “ the news of the deaths of those for whose
 “ sake our country is a name so dear to us,
 “ and at the same time to shed tears for those
 “ for whose sakes our country is not a name
 “ so dear to us ?”

But this formidable assailant is least resisti-
 ble when he attacks the probability of the
 action, and the reasonableness of the plan.
 Every critical reader must remark, that Ad-
 dison has, with a scrupulosity almost unex-
 ampled on the English stage, confined him-
 self in time to a single day, and in place to
 rigorous unity. The scene never changes,
 and the whole action of the play passes in the
 great hall of Cato’s house at Utica. Much
 therefore is done in the hall, for which any
 other place had been more fit ; and this im-
 propriety affords Dennis many hints of mer-
 riment, and opportunities of triumph. The
 passage is long ; but as such disquisitions are

not common, and the objections are skilfully formed and vigorously urged, those who delight in critical controversy will not think it tedious.

“ Upon the departure of Portius, Sempronius makes but one soliloquy, and immediately in comes Syphax, and then the two politicians are at it immediately. They lay their heads together, with their snuff-boxes in their hands, as Mr. Bayes has it, and league it away. But, in the midst of that wise scene, Syphax seems to give a seasonable caution to Sempronius :

“ *Syph.* But is it true, Sempronius, that your senate

“ Is call'd together? Gods! thou must be cautious,

“ Cato has piercing eyes.

“ There is a great deal of caution shewn indeed, in meeting in a governor's own hall to carry on their plot against him. Whatever opinion they have of his eyes, I suppose they had none of his ears, or they would never have talked at this foolish rate so near :

—“ Gods! thou must be cautious.

Oh !

“ Oh! yes, very cautious: for if Cato should
 “ overhear you, and turn you off for politi-
 “ cians, Cæsar would never take you; no,
 “ Cæsar would never take you.

“ When Cato, Act II. turns the senators
 “ out of the hall, upon pretence of acquaint-
 “ ing Juba with the result of their debates,
 “ he appears to me to do a thing which is
 “ neither reasonable nor civil. Juba might
 “ certainly have better been made acquainted
 “ with the result of that debate in some pri-
 “ vate apartment of the palace. But the
 “ poet was driven upon this absurdity to
 “ make way for another; and that is, to give
 “ Juba an opportunity to demand Marcia of
 “ her father. But the quarrel and rage of Juba
 “ and Syphax, in the same Act, the invectives
 “ of Syphax against the Romans and Cato;
 “ the advice that he gives Juba, in her fa-
 “ ther's hall, to bear away Marcia by force;
 “ and his brutal and clamorous rage upon his
 “ refusal, and at a time when Cato was scarce
 “ out of sight, and perhaps not out of hear-
 “ ing; at least, some of his guards or do-
 “ mesticks must necessarily be supposed to

“ be within hearing; is a thing that is so
 “ far from being probable, that it is hardly
 “ possible.

“ Sempronius, in the second Act, comes
 “ back once more in the same morning to
 “ the governor’s hall, to carry on the con-
 “ spiracy with Syphax against the governor,
 “ his country, and his family; which is so
 “ stupid, that it is below the wisdom of the
 “ O—’s, the Mac’s, and the Teague’s; even
 “ Eustace Commins himself would never
 “ have gone to Justice-hall, to have conspir-
 “ ed again the government. If officers at
 “ Portsmouth should lay their heads toge-
 “ ther, in order to the carrying off J—G—’s
 “ niece or daughter, would they meet in
 “ J—G—’s hall, to carry on that conspi-
 “ racy? There would be no necessity for
 “ their meeting there, at least till they came
 “ to the execution of their plot, because there
 “ would be other places to meet in. There
 “ would be no probability that they should
 “ meet there, because there would be places
 “ more private and more commodious. Now
 “ there ought to be nothing in a tragical
 “ action but what is necessary or probable.

“ But treason is not the only thing that is
 “ carried on in this hall : that and love, and
 “ philosophy, take their turns in it, without
 “ any manner of necessity or probability oc-
 “ casioned by the action, as duly and as re-
 “ gularly, without interrupting one another,
 “ as if there were a triple league between
 “ them, and a mutual agreement that each
 “ should give place to and make way for the
 “ other, in a due and orderly succession.

“ We come now to the third Act. Sem-
 “ pronius, in this Act, comes into the gover-
 “ nor’s hall, with the leaders of the mutiny :
 “ but as soon as Cato is gone, Sempronius,
 “ who but just before had acted like an un-
 “ paralleled knave, discovers himself, like
 “ an egregious fool, to be an accomplice in
 “ the conspiracy.

“ *Semp.* Know, villains, when such paltry
 “ slaves presume
 “ To mix in treason, if the plot succeeds,
 “ They’re thrown neglected by : but if it fails,
 “ They’re sure to die like dogs, as you shall do.
 “ Here, take these factious monsters, drag them
 “ forth
 “ To sudden death.—

" 'Tis true, indeed, the second leader says,
 " there are none there but friends: but is that
 " possible at such a juncture? Can a parcel
 " of rogues attempt to assassinate the gover-
 " nor of a town of war, in his own house,
 " in mid-day, and after they are discovered
 " and defeated, can there be none near
 " them but friends? Is it not plain from
 " these words of Sempronius,

" Here, take these factious monsters, drag them
 " forth

" To sudden death—

" and from the entrance of the guards upon
 " the word of command, that those guards
 " were within ear-shot? Behold Sempronius
 " then palpably discovered. How comes it
 " to pass, then, that, instead of being hanged
 " up with the rest, he remains secure in the
 " governor's hall, and there carries on his
 " conspiracy against the government, the
 " third time in the same day, with his old
 " comrade Syphax? who enters at the same
 " time that the guards are carrying away the
 " leaders, big with the news of the defeat
 " of Sempronius; though where he had his
 " intelligence so soon is difficult to imagine.

" And

“ And now the reader may expect a very extraordinary scene : there is not abundance of spirit indeed, nor a great deal of passion, but there is wisdom more than enough to supply all defects.

“ *Syph.* Our first design, my friend, has prov’d abortive ;

“ Still there remains an after-game to play :

“ My troops are mounted, their Numidian steeds

“ Snuff up the winds, and long to scour the desert :

“ Let but Sempronius lead us in our flight,

“ We’ll force the gate, where Marcus keeps his guard,

“ And hew down all that would oppose our passage ;

“ A day will bring us into Cæsar’s camp.

“ *Semp.* Confusion ! I have fail’d of half my purpose ;

“ Marcia, the charming Marcia’s left behind.

“ Well ! but though he tells us the half-

“ purpose that he has fail’d of, he does not

“ tell us the half that he has carried. But

“ what does he mean by

“ Marcia, the charming Marcia’s left behind ?

“ He

“ He is now in her own house ; and we have
 “ neither seen her nor heard of her any
 “ where else since the play began. But now
 “ let us hear Syphax :

“ What hinders then, but that thou find her out,
 “ And hurry her away by manly force ?

“ But what does old Syphax mean by find-
 “ ing her out ? They talk as if she were
 “ as hard to be found as a hare in a frosty
 “ morning.

“ *Semp.* But how to gain admission ?

“ Oh ! she is found out then, it seems.

“ But how to gain admission ? for access

“ Is giv’n to none, but Juba and her brothers.

“ But, raillery apart, why access to Juba ?
 “ For he was owned and received as a lover
 “ neither by the father nor by the daughter.
 “ Well ! but let that pass. Syphax puts
 “ Sempronius out of pain immediately ; and,
 “ being a Numidian, abounding in wiles,
 “ supplies him with a stratagem for admis-
 “ sion, that, I believe, is a non-pareille :

“ *Syph.*

“ *Syph.* Thou shalt have Juba’s dress, and Juba’s guards ;

“ The doors will open, when Numidia’s prince
“ Seems to appear before them.

“ Sempronius is, it seems, to pass for Juba
“ in full day at Cato’s house, where they were
“ both so very well known, by having Juba’s
“ dress and his guards : as if one of the mar-
“ shals of France could pass for the duke of
“ Bavaria, at noon-day, at Versailles, by hav-
“ ing his dress and liveries. But how does
“ Syphax pretend to help Sempronius to
“ young Juba’s dress ? Does he serve him in
“ a double capacity, as general and master
“ of his wardrobe ? But why Juba’s guards ?
“ For the devil of any guards has Juba ap-
“ peared with yet. Well ! though this is a
“ mighty politick invention, yet, methinks,
“ they might have done without it : for,
“ since the advice that Syphax gave to Sem-
“ pronius was,

“ To hurry her away by manly force,

“ in my opinion, the shortest and likeliest
“ way of coming at the lady was by demolish-
“ ing, instead of putting on an impertinent
“ disguise to circumvent two or three slaves.

“ But

“ But Sempronius, it seems, is of another
 “ opinion. He extols to the skies the in-
 “ vention of old Syphax :

“ *Sempr.* Heavens ! what a thought was there !

“ Now I appeal to the reader, if I have
 “ not been as good as my word. Did I
 “ not tell him, that I would lay before him
 “ a very wise scene ?

“ But now let us lay before the reader,
 “ that part of the scenery of the Fourth Act,
 “ which may shew the absurdities which the
 “ author has run into, through the indis-
 “ creet observance of the Unity of Place.
 “ I do not remember that Aristotle has said
 “ any thing expressly concerning the Unity
 “ of Place. 'Tis true, implicitly he has
 “ said enough in the rules which he has laid
 “ down for the Chorus. For, by making
 “ the Chorus an essential part of Tragedy,
 “ and by bringing it on the stage immedi-
 “ ately after the opening of the scene, and
 “ retaining it there till the very catastrophe,
 “ he has so determined and fixed the place
 “ of action, that it was impossible for an
 “ author

“ author on the Grecian stage to break
 “ through that unity. I am of opinion, that
 “ if a modern tragic poet can preserve the
 “ unity of place, without destroying the
 “ probability of the incidents, ’tis always
 “ best for him to do it ; because, by the pre-
 “ servation of that unity, as we have taken
 “ notice above, he adds grace, and cleanness,
 “ and comeliness, to the representation. But
 “ since there are no express rules about it,
 “ and we are under no compulsion to keep
 “ it, since we have no Chorus as the Grecian
 “ poet had ; if it cannot be preserved, with-
 “ out rendering the greater part of the in-
 “ cidents unreasonable and absurd, and per-
 “ haps sometimes monstrous, ’tis certainly
 “ better to break it.

“ Now comes bully Sempronius, comically
 “ accoutred and equipped with his Numi-
 “ dian dress and his Numidian guards. Let
 “ the reader attend to him with all his ears ;
 “ for the words of the wife are precious :

“ *Sempr.* The deer is lodg’d, I’ve track’d her
 “ to her covert.

“ Now I would fain know why this deer
 “ is said to be lodged, since we have not
 “ heard

“heard one word, since the play began, of
 “her being at all out of harbour: and if we
 “consider the discourse with which she
 “and Lucia begin the Act, we have reason
 “to believe that they had hardly been talk-
 “ing of such matters in the street. How-
 “ever, to pleasure Sempronius, let us sup-
 “pose, for once, that the deer is lodged:

“The deer is lodg’d, I’ve track’d her to her
 “covert.

“If he had seen her in the open field,
 “what occasion had he to track her, when
 “he had so many Numidian dogs at his
 “heels, which, with one halloo, he might
 “have set upon her haunches? If he did not
 “see her in the open field, how could he
 “possibly track her? If he had seen her in
 “the street, why did he not set upon her in
 “the street, since through the street she must
 “be carried at last? Now here, instead of
 “having his thoughts upon his business,
 “and upon the present danger; instead of
 “meditating and contriving how he shall
 “pass with his mistress through the southern
 “gate, where her brother Marcus is upon
 “the guard, and where she would certainly
 “prove

“ prove an impediment to him, which is the
 “ Roman word for the *baggage* ; instead of
 “ doing this, Sempronius is entertaining
 “ himself with whimsies :

“ *Sempr.* How will the young Numidian rave
 “ to see

“ His mistress lost ? If aught could glad my soul,

“ Beyond th’ enjoyment of so bright a prize,

“ ’Twould be to torture that young gay Barba-
 “ rian.

“ But hark ! what noise ? Death to my hopes,

“ ’tis he,

“ ’Tis Juba’s self ! There is but one way left !

“ He must be murder’d, and a passage cut

“ Through those his guards.

“ Pray, what are *those his guards* ? I
 “ thought at present, that Juba’s guards had
 “ been Sempronius’s tools, and had been
 “ dangling after his heels.

“ But now let us sum up all these absur-
 “ dities together. Sempronius goes at noon-
 “ day, in Juba’s clothes, and with Juba’s
 “ guards, to Cato’s palace, in order to pass
 “ for Juba, in a place where they were
 “ both so very well known : he meets
 “ Juba

“ Juba there, and resolves to murder him with
“ his own guards. Upon the guards appear-
“ ing a little bashful, he threatens them :

“ Hah ! Daftards, do you tremble !

“ Or act like men, or by yon azure heav’n !

“ But the guards still remaining restive, Sem-
“ pronius himself attacks Juba, while each
“ of the guards is representing Mr. Specta-
“ tor’s sign of the Gaper, awed, it seems, and
“ terrified by Sempronius’s threats. Juba
“ kills Sempronius, and takes his own army
“ prisoners, and carries them in triumph
“ away to Cato. Now I would fain know,
“ if any part of Mr. Bayes’s tragedy is so full
“ of absurdity as this ?

“ Upon hearing the clash of swords, Lucia
“ and Marcia come in. The question is,
“ why no men come in upon hearing the
“ noise of swords in the governor’s hall ?
“ Where was the governor himself ? Where
“ were his guards ? Where were his fer-
“ vants ? Such an attempt as this, so
“ near the person of a governor of a place
“ of war, was enough to alarm the whole
“ garrison : and yet, for almost half an hour
“ after

“ after Sempronius was killed, we find none
 “ of those appear, who were the likeliest in
 “ the world to be alarmed; and the noise of
 “ swords is made to draw only two poor wo-
 “ men thither, who were most certain to run
 “ away from it. Upon Lucia and Marcia’s
 “ coming in, Lucia appears in all the symp-
 “ toms of an hysterical gentlewoman :

“ *Luc.* Sure ’twas the clash of swords ! my trou-
 “ bled heart

“ Is so cast down, and sunk amidst its sorrows,
 “ It throbs with fear, and akes at every sound !
 “ And immediately her old whimsy returns
 “ upon her :

“ O Marcia, should thy brothers, for my sake—

“ I die away with horror at the thought.

“ She fancies that there can be no cutting-of-
 “ throats, but it must be for her. If this is
 “ tragical, I would fain know what is comi-
 “ cal. Well ! upon this they spy the body
 “ of Sempronius ; and Marcia, deluded by
 “ the habit, it seems, takes him for Juba ;
 “ for, says she,

“ The face is muffled up within the garment.

“ Now how a man could fight, and fall with

“ his face muffled up in his garment, is, I
 “ think, a little hard to conceive ! Besides,
 “ Juba, before he killed him, knew him to
 “ be Sempronius. It was not by his gar-
 “ ment that he knew this ; it was by his face
 “ then : his face therefore was not muffled.
 “ Upon seeing this man with the muffled
 “ face, Marcia falls a-raving ; and, owning
 “ her passion for the supposed defunct, begins
 “ to make his funeral oration. Upon which
 “ Juba enters listening, I suppose on tip-toe :
 “ for I cannot imagine how any one can enter
 “ listening, in any other posture. I would
 “ fain know how it came to pass, that during
 “ all this time he had sent nobody, no not
 “ so much as a candle-snuffer, to take away
 “ the dead body of Sempronius. Well !
 “ but let us regard him listening. Having
 “ left his apprehension behind him, he, at
 “ first, applies what Marcia says to Sempro-
 “ nius. But finding at last, with much ado,
 “ that he himself is the happy man, he quits
 “ his eve-dropping, and discovers himself just
 “ time enough to prevent his being cuckol-
 “ ed by a dead man, of whom the moment
 “ before he had appeared so jealous ; and
 “ greedily intercepts the blifs, which was
 “ fondly

“ fondly designed for one who could not
 “ be the better for it. But here I must ask a
 “ question: how comes Juba to listen here,
 “ who had not listened before throughout
 “ the play? Or, how comes he to be the
 “ only person of this tragedy who listens,
 “ when love and treason were so often talked
 “ in so publick a place as a hall? I am afraid
 “ the author was driven upon all these ab-
 “ surdities only to introduce this miserable
 “ mistake of Marcia; which, after all, is
 “ much below the dignity of tragedy, as any
 “ thing is which is the effect or result of
 “ trick.

“ But let us come to the scenery of the
 “ Fifth Act. Cato appears first upon the
 “ scene, sitting in a thoughtful posture; in
 “ his hand Plato’s treatise on the Immortali-
 “ ty of the Soul, a drawn sword on the table
 “ by him. Now let us consider the place in
 “ which this fight is presented to us. The
 “ place, forsooth, is a long hall. Let us sup-
 “ pose, that any one should place himself in
 “ this posture, in the midst of one of our
 “ halls in London; that he should appear
 “ *solus*, in a fullen posture, a drawn sword on

“ the table by him ; in his hand Plato’s treatise on the Immortality of the Soul, translated lately by Bernard Lintot : I desire the reader to consider, whether such a person as this would pass with them, who beheld him for a great patriot, a great philosopher, or a general, or for some whimsical person who fancied himself all these ; and whether the people, who belonged to the family, would think that such a person had a design upon their midriffs or his own ?

“ In short, that Cato should sit long enough, in the afore said posture, in the midst of this large hall, to read over Plato’s treatise on the Immortality of the Soul, which is a lecture of two long hours ; that he should propose to himself to be private there upon that occasion ; that he should be angry with his son for intruding there ; then, that he should leave this hall upon the pretence of sleep, give himself the mortal wound in his bedchamber, and then be brought back into that hall to expire, purely to shew his good-breeding, and save his friends the trouble of coming up to his
 “ bedchamber ;

“ bedchamber ; all this appears to me to be
 “ improbable, incredible, impossible.”

Such is the censure of Dennis. There is, as Dryden expresses it, perhaps *too much horse-play in his raillery* ; but if his jests are coarse, his arguments are strong. Yet as we love better to be pleased than to be taught, Cato is read, and the critick is neglected.

Flushed with consciousness of these detections of absurdity in the conduct, he afterwards attacked the sentiments of Cato ; but he then amused himself with petty cavils, and minute objections.

Of Addison's smaller poems, no particular mention is necessary ; they have little that can employ or require a critick. The parallel of the Princes and Gods, in his verses to Kneller, is often happy, but is too well known to be quoted.

His translations, so far as I have compared them, want the exactness of a scholar. That he understood his authors cannot be doubted ; but his versions will not teach others to un-

derstand them, being too licentiously paraphrastical. They are however, for the most part, smooth and easy; and, what is the first excellence of a translator, such as may be read with pleasure by those who do not know the originals.

His poetry is polished and pure; the product of a mind too judicious to commit faults, but not sufficiently vigorous to attain excellence. He has sometimes a striking line, or a shining paragraph; but in the whole he is warm rather than fervid, and shews more dexterity than strength. He was however one of our earliest examples of correctness.

The versification which he had learned from Dryden, he debased rather than refined. His rhymes are often dissonant; in his Georgick he admits broken lines. He uses both triplets and alexandrines, but triplets more frequently in his translations than his other works. The mere structure of verses seems never to have engaged much of his care. But his lines are very smooth in Rosamond, and too smooth in Cato.

Addison

Addison is now to be considered as a critick ; a name which the present generation is scarcely willing to allow him. His criticism is condemned as tentative or experimental, rather than scientifick, and he is considered as deciding by taste rather than by principles.

It is not uncommon for those who have grown wise by the labour of others, to add a little of their own, and overlook their masters. Addison is now despised by some who perhaps would never have seen his defects, but by the lights which he afforded them. That he always wrote as he would think it necessary to write now, cannot be affirmed ; his instructions were such as the character of his readers made proper. That general knowledge which now circulates in common talk, was in his time rarely to be found. Men not professing learning were not ashamed of ignorance ; and in the female world, any acquaintance with books was distinguished only to be censured. His purpose was to infuse literary curiosity, by gentle and unsuspected conveyance, into the gay, the idle, and the wealthy ; he there-

fore presented knowledge in the most alluring form, not lofty and austere, but accessible and familiar. When he shewed them their defects, he shewed them likewise that they might be easily supplied. His attempt succeeded; enquiry was awakened, and comprehension expanded. An emulation of intellectual elegance was excited, and from his time to our own, life has been gradually exalted, and conversation purified and enlarged.

Dryden had, not many years before, scattered criticism over his Prefaces with very little parcimony; but, though he sometimes condescended to be somewhat familiar, his manner was in general too scholastick for those who had yet their rudiments to learn, and found it not easy to understand their master. His observations were framed rather for those that were learning to write, than for those that read only to talk.

An instructor like Addison was now wanting, whose remarks being superficial, might be easily understood, and being just, might prepare the mind for more attainments.

Had

Had he presented *Paradise Lost* to the publick with all the pomp of system and severity of science, he would perhaps have been admired, and the book still have been neglected ; but by the blandishments of gentleness and facility, he has made Milton an universal favourite, with whom readers of every class think it necessary to be pleased.

He descended now and then to lower disquisitions ; and by a serious display of the beauties of *Chevy Chase*, exposed himself to the ridicule of Wagstaff, who bestowed a like pompous character on *Tom Thumb* ; and to the contempt of Dennis, who, considering the fundamental position of his criticism, that *Chevy Chase* pleases, and ought to please, because it is natural, observes, “ that there is a way of deviating from nature, by bombast or tumour, which soars above nature, and enlarges images beyond their real bulk ; by affectation, which forsakes nature in quest of something unsuitable ; and by imbecillity, which degrades nature by faintness and diminution, by obscuring images and weakening effects.” In *Chevy Chase* there is not much of either bombast or affectation ; but there is chill and lifeless imbecillity. The

story cannot possibly be told in a manner that shall make less impression on the mind.

Before the profound observers of the present race repose too securely on the consciousness of their superiority to Addison, let them consider his Remarks on Ovid, in which may be found specimens of criticism sufficiently subtle and refined; let them peruse likewise his Essays on *Wit*, and on the *Pleasures of Imagination*, in which he founds art on the base of nature, and draws the principles of invention from dispositions inherent in the mind of man, with skill and elegance, such as his contemners will not easily attain,

As a describer of life and manners, he must be allowed to stand perhaps the first of the first rank. His humour, which, as Steele observes, is peculiar to himself, is so happily diffused as to give the grace of novelty to domestick scenes and daily occurrences. He never *outsteps the modesty of nature*, nor raises merriment or wonder by the violation of truth. His figures neither divert by distortion, nor amaze by aggravation. He copies life with so much fidelity, that
he

he can be hardly said to invent ; yet his exhibitions have an air so much original, that it is difficult to suppose them not merely the product of imagination.

As a teacher of wisdom, he may be confidently followed. His religion has nothing in it enthusiastick or superstitious : he appears neither weakly credulous nor wantonly sceptical ; his morality is neither dangerously lax, nor impracticably rigid. All the enchantment of fancy, and all the cogency of argument, are employed to recommend to the reader his real interest, the care of pleasing the Author of his being. Truth is shewn sometimes as the phantom of a vision, sometimes appears half-veiled in an allegory ; sometimes attracts regard in the robes of fancy, and sometimes steps forth in the confidence of reason. She wears a thousand dresses, and in all is pleasing.

Mille habet ornatus, mille decenter habet.

His prose is the model of the middle style ; on grave subjects not formal, on light occasions not groveling ; pure without scrupulosity, and exact without apparent elaboration ; always equable, and always easy, without

out glowing words or pointed sentences. Addison never deviates from his track to snatch a grace ; he seeks no ambitious ornaments, and tries no hazardous innovations. His page is always luminous, but never blazes in unexpected splendour.

It seems to have been his principal endeavour to avoid all harshness and severity of diction ; he is therefore sometimes verbose in his transitions and connections, and sometimes descends too much to the language of conversation ; yet if his language had been less idiomatical, it might have lost somewhat of its genuine Anglicism. What he attempted, he performed ; he is never feeble, and he did not wish to be energetick ; he is never rapid, and he never stagnates. His sentences have neither studied amplitude, nor affected brevity : his periods, though not diligently rounded, are voluble and easy. Whoever wishes to attain an English style, familiar but not coarse, and elegant but not ostentatious, must give his days and nights to the volumes of Addison.

H U G H E S.



H U G H E S.

JOH N HUG HES, the son of a citizen of London, and of Anne Burges, of an ancient family in Wiltshire, was born at Marlborough, July 29, 1677. He was educated at a private school ; and though his advances in literature are in the *Biographia* very ostentatiously displayed, the name of his master is somewhat ungratefully concealed.

At nineteen he drew the plan of a tragedy ; and paraphrased, rather too diffusely, the ode of Horace which begins *Integer Vitæ*. To poetry he added the science of musick, in which he seems to have attained considerable skill, together with the practice of design, or rudiments of painting.

His studies did not withdraw him wholly from business, nor did business hinder him from study. He had a place in the office of ordnance, and was secretary to several commissions for purchasing lands necessary to secure the royal docks at Chatham and Portsmouth; yet found time to acquaint himself with modern languages.

In 1697 he published a poem on the *Peace of Ryswick*; and in 1699 another piece, called *The Court of Neptune*, on the return of king William, which he addressed to Mr. Montague, the general patron of the followers of the Muses. The same year he produced a song on the duke of Gloucester's birth-day.

He did not confine himself to poetry, but cultivated other kinds of writing with great success; and about this time shewed his knowledge of human nature by an *Essay on the Pleasure of being deceived*. In 1702 he published, on the death of king William, a Pindarick ode called *The House of Nassau*; and wrote another paraphrase on the *Otium Divos* of Horace.

In

In 1703 his ode on Musick was performed at Stationers Hall; and he wrote afterwards six cantatas, which were set to musick by the greatest master of that time, and seem intended to oppose or exclude the Italian opera, an exotick and irrational entertainment, which has been always combated, and always has prevailed.

His reputation was now so far advanced, that the publick began to pay reverence to his name; and he was solicited to prefix a preface to the translation of *Boccalini*, a writer whose satirical vein cost him his life in Italy; but who never, I believe, found many readers in this country, even though introduced by such powerful recommendation.

He translated Fontenelle's *Dialogues of the Dead*; and his version was perhaps read at that time, but is now neglected; for by a book not necessary, and owing its reputation wholly to its turn of diction, little notice can be gained but from those who can enjoy the graces of the original. To the dialogues of Fontenelle he added two composed by him-

self; and, though not only an honest but a pious man, dedicated his work to the earl of Wharton. He judged skilfully enough of his own interest; for Wharton, when he went lord lieutenant to Ireland, offered to take Hughes with him, and establish him; but Hughes, having hopes or promises from another man in power, of some provision more suitable to his inclination, declined Wharton's offer, and obtained nothing from the other.

He translated the *Miser* of Moliere; but never offered it to the Stage; and occasionally amused himself with making versions of favourite scenes in other plays.

Being now received as a wit among the wits, he paid his contributions to literary undertakings; and assisted both the *Tatler*, *Spectator*, and *Guardian*. In 1712 he translated Vertot's History of the *Revolution of Portugal*; produced an *Ode to the Creator of the World, from the Fragments of Orpheus*; and brought upon the Stage an opera called *Calypso and Telemachus*, intended to shew that the English language might be very happily adapted

adapted to musick. This was impudently opposed by those who were employed in the Italian opera; and, what cannot be told without indignation, the intruders had such interest with the duke of Shrewsbury, then lord Chamberlain, who had married an Italian, as to obtain an obstruction of the profits, though not an inhibition of the performance.

There was at this time a project formed by Tonson for a translation of the *Pharsalia*, by several hands; and Hughes englished the tenth book. But this design, as must often happen where the concurrence of many is necessary, fell to the ground; and the whole work was afterwards performed by Rowe.

His acquaintance with the great writers of his time appears to have been very general; but of his intimacy with Addison there is a remarkable proof. It is told, on good authority, that *Cato* was finished and played by his persuasion. It had long wanted the last act, which he was desired by Addison to supply. If the request was sincere, it proceeded from an opinion, whatever it was, that did not last long; for when Hughes

came in a week to shew him his first attempt, he found half the act written by Addison himself.

He afterwards published the works of *Spenser*, with his Life, a Glossary, and a Discourse on Allegorical Poetry; a work for which he was well qualified, as a judge of the beauties of writing, but perhaps wanted an antiquary's knowledge of the obsolete words. He did not much revive the curiosity of the publick; for near thirty years elapsed before his edition was reprinted. The same year produced his *Apollo and Daphne*, of which the success was very earnestly promoted by Steele, who, when the rage of party did not misguide him, seems to have been a man of boundless benevolence.

Hughes had hitherto suffered the mortifications of a narrow fortune; but in 1717 the lord chancellor Cowper set him at ease, by making him secretary to the Commissions of the Peace; in which he afterwards, by a particular request, desired his successor lord Parker to continue him. He had now affluence; but such is human life, that he had it
when

when his declining health could neither allow him long possession nor quick enjoyment.

His last work was his tragedy, *The Siege of Damascus*; after which *a Siege* became a popular title. This play, which still continues on the Stage, and of which it is unnecessary to add a private voice to such continuance of approbation, is not acted or printed according to the author's original draught, or his settled intention. He had made *Phocys* apostatize from his religion; after which the abhorrence of *Eudocia* would have been reasonable, his misery would have been just, and the horrors of his repentance exemplary. The players, however, required that the guilt of *Phocys* should terminate in desertion to the enemy; and Hughes, unwilling that his relations should lose the benefit of his work, complied with the alteration.

He was now weak with a lingering consumption, and not able to attend the rehearsal; yet was so vigorous in his faculties, that only ten days before his death he wrote the dedication to his patron lord Cowper.

On February 17, 1719-20, the play was represented, and the author died. He lived to hear that it was well received; but paid no regard to the intelligence, being then wholly employed in the meditations of a departing Christian.

A man of his character was undoubtedly regretted; and Steele devoted an essay, in the paper called *The Theatre*, to the memory of his virtues. His life is written in the *Biographia* with some degree of favourable partiality; and an account of him is prefixed to his works, by his relation the late Mr. Duncombe, a man whose blameless elegance deserved the same respect.

The character of his genius I shall transcribe from the correspondence of *Swift* and *Pope*.

“A month ago,” says *Swift*, “was sent
 “me over, by a friend of mine, the works
 “of *John Hughes*, Esquire. They are in
 “prose and verse. I never heard of the man
 “in my life, yet I find your name as a sub-
 “scriber.

“ scriber. He is too great a poet for me ;
“ and I think among the *mediocrists*, in prose
“ as well as verse.”

To this Pope returns : “ To answer your
“ question as to Mr. *Hughes* ; what he want-
“ ed in genius, he made up as an honest
“ man ; but he was of the class you think
“ him.”

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S H E F F I E L D,
B U C K I N G H A M S H I R E.

ALFRED H. HARRIS
JANUARY 1912

S H E F F I E L D,
B U C K I N G H A M S H I R E.

J O H N S H E F F I E L D, descended from a long series of illustrious ancestors, was born in 1649, the son of Edmund earl of Mulgrave, who died 1658. The young lord was put into the hands of a tutor, with whom he was so little satisfied, that he got rid of him in a short time, and, at an age not exceeding twelve years, resolved to educate himself. Such a purpose, formed at such an age, and successfully prosecuted, delights as it is strange, and instructs as it is real.

His literary acquisitions are more wonderful, as the years in which they are commonly made were spent in the tumult of a military life, or the gaiety of a court. When
war

war was declared against the Dutch, he went at seventeen on board the ship in which prince Rupert and the duke of Albemarle sailed, with the command of the fleet; but by contrariety of winds they were restrained from action. His zeal for the king's service was recompensed by the command of one of the independent troops of horse, then raised to protect the coast.

Next year he received a summons to parliament, which as he was then but eighteen years old, the earl of Northumberland censured as at least indecent, and his objection was allowed. He had a quarrel with the earl of Rochester, which he has perhaps too ostentatiously related, as Rochester's surviving sister, the lady Sandwich, is said to have told him with very sharp reproaches.

When another Dutch war (1672) broke out, he went again a volunteer in the ship which the celebrated lord Ossory commanded; and there made, as he relates, two curious remarks.

“ I have observed two things, which I dare affirm, though not generally believed.

“ One

“ One was, that the wind of a cannon-bullet,
“ though flying never so near, is incapable
“ of doing the least harm ; and, indeed, were
“ it otherwise, no man above deck would
“ escape. The other was, that a great shot
“ may be sometimes avoided, even as it flies;
“ by changing one’s ground a little ; for,
“ when the wind sometimes blew away the
“ smoak, it was so clear a sun-shiny day
“ that we could easily perceive the bullets
“ (that were half-spent) fall into the water,
“ and from thence bound up again among
“ us, which gives sufficient time for making
“ a step or two on any side ; though, in so
“ swift a motion, ’tis hard to judge well in
“ what line the bullet comes, which, if mis-
“ taken, may by removing cost a man his
“ life, instead of saving it.”

His behaviour was so favourably represented by lord Ossory, that he was advanced to the command of the Katherine, the best second-rate ship in the navy.

He afterwards raised a regiment of foot, and commanded it as colonel. The land-forces were sent a-shore by prince Rupert; and he lived in the camp very familiarly
with

with Schomberg. He was then appointed colonel of the old Holland regiment, together with his own; and had the promise of a garter, which he obtained in his twenty-fifth year. He was likewise made gentleman of the bed-chamber.

He afterwards went into the French service, to learn the art of war under Turenne, but staid only a short time. Being by the duke of Monmouth opposed in his pretensions to the first troop of horse-guards, he, in return, made Monmouth suspected by the duke of York. He was however, not long after, when the unlucky Monmouth fell into disgrace, recompensed with the lieutenancy of Yorkshire and the government of Hull.

Thus rapidly did he make his way both to military and civil honours and employments; yet, busy as he was, he did not neglect his studies, but at least cultivated poetry; in which he must have been early considered as uncommonly skilful, if it be true which is reported, that, when he was yet not twenty years old, his recommendation advanced Dryden to the laurel.

The

The Moors having besiged Tangier, he was sent (1680) with two thousand men to its relief. A strange story is told of danger to which he was intentionally exposed in a leaky ship, to gratify some resentful jealousy of the king, whose health he therefore would never permit at his table, till he saw himself in a safer place. His voyage was prosperously performed in three weeks, and the Moors without a contest retired before him.

In this voyage he composed the *Vision*; a licentious poem, such as was fashionable in those times, with little power of invention or propriety of sentiment.

At his return he found the King kind, who perhaps had never been angry; and he continued a wit and a courtier as before.

At the succession of king James, to whom he was intimately known, and by whom he thought himself beloved, he naturally expected still brighter sun-shine; but all know how soon that reign began to gather clouds. His expectations were not disappointed; he was immediately admitted into the privy council, and made lord chamberlain. He
accepted

accepted a place in the high commission, without knowledge, as he declared after the Revolution, of its illegality. Having few religious scruples, he attended the king to mass, and kneeled with the rest; but had no disposition to receive the Romish Faith, or to force it upon others; for when the priests, encouraged by his appearances of compliance, attempted to convert him, he told them, as Burnet has recorded, that he was willing to receive instruction, and that he had taken much pains to believe in God who made the world and all men in it; but that he should not be easily persuaded *that man was quits, and made God again.*

A pointed sentence is bestowed by successive transmission on the last whom it will fit: this censure of transubstantiation, whatever be its value, was uttered long ago by Anne Askew, one of the first sufferers for the Protestant Religion, who in the time of Henry VIII. was tortured in the Tower; concerning which there is reason to wonder that it was not known to the Historian of the Reformation.

In the Revolution he acquiesced, though he did not promote it. There was once a design of associating him in the invitation of the prince of Orange ; but the earl of Shrewsbury discouraged the attempt, by declaring that Mulgrave would never concur. This king William afterwards told him, and asked what he would have done if the proposal had been made. *Sir, said he, I would have discovered it to the king whom I then served.* To which King William replied, *I cannot blame you.*

Finding king James irremediably excluded, he voted for the conjunctive sovereignty, upon this principle, that he thought the titles of the prince and his consort equal, and it would please the prince their protector to have a share in the sovereignty. This vote gratified king William ; yet, either by the king's distrust or his own discontent, he lived some years without employment. He looked on the king with malevolence, and, if his verses or his prose may be credited, with contempt. He was, notwithstanding this aversion or indifference, made marquis of Normanby (1694) ; but still opposed the

court on some important questions ; yet at last he was received into the cabinet council, with a pension of three thousand pounds.

At the accession of queen Anne, whom he is said to have courted when they were both young, he was highly favoured. Before her coronation (1702) she made him lord privy seal, and soon after lord lieutenant of the North-riding of Yorkshire. He was then named commissioner for treating with the Scots about the Union ; and was made next year first duke of Normanby, and then of Buckinghamshire, there being suspected to be somewhere a latent claim to the title of Buckingham.

Soon after becoming jealous of the duke of Marlborough, he resigned the privy seal, and joined the discontented Tories in a motion extremely offensive to the Queen, for inviting the princess Sophia to England. The Queen courted him back with an offer no less than that of the chancellorship, which he refused. He now retired from business, and built that house in the Park, which is now

the Queen's, upon ground granted by the Crown.

When the ministry was changed (1710), he was made lord chamberlain of the household, and concurred in all transactions of that time, except that he endeavoured to protect the Catalans. After the Queen's death, he became a constant opponent of the Court; and, having no publick business, is supposed to have amused himself by writing his two tragedies. He died February 24, 1720-21.

He was thrice married; by his two first wives he had no children; by his third, who was the daughter of king James by the countess of Dorchester, and the widow of the earl of Anglesey, he had, besides other children that died early, a son born in 1716, who died in 1735, and put an end to the line of Sheffield. It is observable that the Duke's three wives were all widows. The Dutchess died in 1742.

His character is not to be proposed as worthy of imitation. His religion he may be supposed to have learned from Hobbes, and his

morality was such as naturally proceeds from loose opinions. His sentiments with respect to women he picked up in the court of Charles, and his principles concerning property were such as a gaming-table supplies. He was censured as covetous, and has been defended by an instance of inattention to his affairs, as if a man might not at once be corrupted by avarice and idleness. He is said, however, to have had much tenderness, and to have been very ready to apologise for his violences of passion.

He is introduced into the late collection only as a poet ; and, if we credit the testimony of his contemporaries, he was a poet of no vulgar rank. But favour and flattery are now at an end ; criticism is no longer softened by his bounties or awed by his splendor, and, being able to take a more steady view, discovers him to be a writer that sometimes glimmers, but rarely shines, feebly laborious, and at best but pretty. His songs are upon common topics ; he hopes, and grieves, and repents, and despairs, and rejoices, like any other maker of little stanzas : to be great he hardly tries ; to be gay is hardly in his power.

In

In the Essay on Satire he was always supposed to have had the help of Dryden. His Essay on Poetry is the great work, for which he was praised by Roscommon, Dryden, and Pope, and doubtless by many more whose eulogies have perished.

Upon this piece he appears to have set a high value; for he was all his life improving it by successive revivals, so that there is scarcely any poem to be found of which the last edition differs more from the first. Amongst other changes, mention is made of some compositions of Dryden, which were written after the Essay.

At the time when this work first appeared, Milton's fame was not yet fully established, and therefore Tasso and Spenser were set before him. The two last lines were these. The Epick Poet, says he,

Must above Milton's lofty flights prevail,
Succeed where great Torquato, and where greater
Spenser fail.

The last line in succeeding editions was shortened, and the order of names continued;
but

but now Milton is at last advanced to the highest place, and the passage thus adjusted,

Must above Taffo's lofty flights prevail,
Succeed where Spenser, and ev'n Milton fail.

Amendments are seldom made without some token of a rent: *lofty* does not suit Taffo so well as Milton.

One celebrated line seems to be borrowed,
The Essay calls a perfect character

A faultless monster which the world ne'er saw.

Scaliger in his poems terms Virgil *sine labe monstrum*. Sheffield can scarcely be supposed to have read Scaliger's poetry; perhaps he found the words in a quotation.

Of this Essay, which Dryden has exalted so highly, it may be justly said that the precepts are judicious, sometimes new, and often happily expressed; but there are, after all the emendations, many weak lines, and some strange appearances of negligence; as, when he gives the laws of elegy, he insists upon connection and coherence; without which, says he,

'Tis

'Tis epigram, 'tis point, 'tis what you will ;
 But not an elegy, nor writ with skill,
 No Panegyrick, nor a Cooper's Hill.

Who would not suppose that Waller's Panegyrick and Denham's Cooper's Hill were Elegies ?

His verses are often insipid ; but his memoirs are lively and agreeable ; he had the perspicuity and elegance of an historian, but not the fire and fancy of a poet.

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